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Iraqi vice-president due here today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraqi Vice-President Taha Moheidine Marouf is scheduled to arrive here today on a four-day visit to Jordan, informed sources said. Mr. Marouf is on his way to attend a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) meeting in Rome. Details of his schedule here were not immediately available. It will be the first visit of a senior Iraqi official to Jordan for nearly one year. The visit of Mr. Marouf follows successful talks that a Jordanian official delegation held in Baghdad on the use of Aqaba port as one of the main conduit for imports to Iraq, particularly with the expected implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 986, which allows Iraq to sell oil worth \$1 billion every three months to raise funds for food and medicine purchases under strict U.N. supervision (see page 9).

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Premier reviews administrative reform

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Tuesday visited the Ministry of Administrative Development and was briefed on its programmes and future plans regarding the reorganisation of the civil service. Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser and senior ministry staff outlined plans for upgrading and modernising the Civil Service Commission and the introduction of new measures concerning allowances regulations. Also on Tuesday the prime minister visited the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre and met its director, Salim Khalifeh, and senior staff who outlined the centre's duties and its production of maps. Mr. Khalifeh said the maps give comprehensive data on water, soil, agriculture and the geological features of Jordan.

Jordan, U.S. end joint exercises

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and American battalions have concluded a joint military exercise. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai attended part of the exercises and was briefed on their progress by commanders of the battalions. These exercises come in the context of an annual programme involving the Jordanian Armed Forces with those of Arab and friendly countries.

French businessmen head for Iraq

AMMAN (AP) — A delegation of French businessmen headed for Iraq Tuesday in yet another sign of growing French interest in the potentially lucrative Iraqi market. The 11-member group is the second French delegation to visit Iraq in a week. On Sunday, four French lawmakers met Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz in Baghdad. Nadira Manchot, an organizer of the trip, said the group would discuss trade prospects with Iraqi officials and merchants once international sanctions are lifted. "We want to familiarise ourselves with the Iraqi market, its needs and what we can do to improve conditions that worsened as a result of the sanctions," Ms. Manchot told the Associated Press.

Egypt seizes record haul of drugs

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt on Tuesday seized 50 kilograms of cocaine and half a tonne of hashish in the "largest ever" haul of narcotics smuggled into the country. Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfi said. He said the drugs were seized in the southern Red Sea port of Nuweiba. Five Egyptians and a Jordanian were involved in the bid to smuggle the narcotics into Egypt aboard a dinghy across the Red Sea, the Interior Ministry said. It said that clashes were still underway between security forces and the six suspects who managed to flee into mountains in the Sinai region. At least one trafficker was believed to have been injured in an exchange of gunfire security forces seized their boat, a truck, rifles and 800 rounds of ammunition as well as three Walkie-Talkies, a portable phone and a radio transmitter and receiver, the ministry said.

Final opinion poll gives Clinton 11-point lead as Americans vote

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton led Republican challenger Bob Dole by 11 percentage points in a final CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll released Tuesday. The poll of 1,488 likely voters, with a margin of error of plus or minus three points, gave Mr. Clinton a lead over Mr. Dole of 52 to 41 per cent. Reform Party candidate Ross Perot was favoured by seven per cent. Asked who they would vote for in congressional races, 49.5 per cent favoured Democratic candidates in their districts while 50.5 favoured Republicans.

Long lines were reported at many polling stations along the East Coast and good weather was anticipated across most of the country. The turnout included a number of joggers who cast their ballots before sunrise on Manhattan's Upper West side on the way to their morning run in Central Park. In Atlanta, Georgia, election officials reported long lines and overflowing parking lots in many locations during the morning rush hour.

In Miami, Florida voters turned out early to cast ballots in a state the Democrats have not carried in 20 years, crowding into polling centres on their way to work. Besides a president for the next four years, voters were also choosing 34 senators, all 435 members of the House of Representatives, 11 of the 50 state governors and making decisions on a variety of ballot initiatives, such as whether Californians want to legalise marijuana for medicinal purposes.

The campaign trail ended for both Mr. Clinton and Mr. Dole in the pre-dawn darkness to cap a final, frenzied period of travel. Mr. Clinton was resting in a hotel in Little Rock, Arkansas, where city officials were preparing a huge election-night celebration in anticipation of their native son's reelection. "This is the greatest country in human history because we have created a system in which you are the boss," Mr. Clinton told a late-night crowd in Sioux City, South Dakota, at what he called "the last rally of the last campaign I will ever run."

Hoarse and haggard from his exhausting 96-hour "march to victory" through 17 states, Mr. Dole was headed to his hometown of Russell, Kansas. He made a wee-hour stop in Independence, Missouri, the hometown of Harry Truman, whose legendary 1948 come-from-behind victory is the standard for all underdog candidates. "What was true for Harry Truman in 1948 will be true for Bob Dole and Jack Kemp in 1996," said the 73-year-old Dole. "The people are once again going to win this election today."

Mr. Clinton and his team were buoyant. On Air Force One en route from South Dakota to Arkansas, he and his wife Hillary toasted their staff and the secret service agents who have been away from home so often because of the campaign. Opinion surveys unanimously forecast reelection for Democrat Clinton, despite a late sag sparked by Mr. Dole's attacks on Mr. Clinton's character and the alleged influence of foreign cash in his campaign and his government. The polls suggested that voters might check Mr. Clinton with another Republican Congress or even deny him the majority popular support he covets. Many voters were not inspired by the choices. "Neither party has a great candidate," said Janet

(Continued on page 7)

King exchanges views with Arafat, receives Abbas

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday had a phone call with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat during which they exchanged views over the latest developments in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. The King and President Arafat underlined the importance of implementing the Palestinian-Israeli agreements in the interim in order to move to the final status talks. King Hussein also received at Al Nadwa Palace Mr. Arafat's advisor Mahmoud Abbas.

Discussions dealt with bilateral relations and the latest developments in the Middle East peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track. The King reiterated the Jordanian stand in supporting the Palestinians in their quest to regain their legitimate rights on their national soil. The King also affirmed the importance of exerting every effort to push the peace process forward in accordance with all signed agreements. He pointed out that such efforts should not be confined to an Israeli redeployment in Hebron and should cover the full implementation of all agreements.

Sheikh Sabah receives Kabariti message

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah on Tuesday received a message from the Jordanian prime minister and foreign minister, Abdul Karim Kabariti, on bilateral relations, the Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) reported. The message was delivered to Sheikh Sabah, who is also Kuwait's deputy prime minister, by Ibrahim Nabulsi, director Mr. Kabariti's office. KUNA said the letter covered bilateral relations, but gave no details. It was the second reported visit to Kuwait of a senior Jordanian official since the Gulf war ended in 1991. It was seen as a further improvement in Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations following a strain caused by the Gulf crisis. Full diplomatic relations are expected to resume soon. Jordan's embassy in Kuwait was closed six years ago, while the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission in Amman is headed by a charge d'affaires.

Bhutto under virtual house arrest; Leghari swears in caretaker premier

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was under virtual house arrest Tuesday, stripped of power the president who said he was forced to act after accusations piled up that Pakistan's first woman prime minister was corrupt, inept and undemocratic. President Farooq Leghari sworn in caretaker Prime Minister Meraj Khalid and a nine-member cabinet on Tuesday, replacing the sacked Bhutto government, state-run television said. Mr. Khalid, 80, and his nine colleagues swore their oaths of office in a ceremony at the presidential palace in Islamabad, television showed. Mr. Leghari earlier dissolved parliament, sacked Ms. Bhutto's three-year-old government and named Mr. Khalid to head a caretaker administration to supervise general elections on Feb. 3. The television named the cabinet members as Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, Shabid Hamid, Shafiqat Mahmood, Javid Jabbar, Irshad Ahmad Haqqani, Omar Afridi, Sadiq Nawaz Awan, Syeda Abida Hussain and Mohammad Zubair, but did not give their portfolios.

The list is a mix of politicians and technocrats drawn from different political parties, including Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the main opposition Pakistan Muslim League. Ms. Bhutto's phones were cut off and several soldiers flashing assault rifles were stationed at the prime minister's official residence all day Tuesday, allowing only a few people in to see Ms. Bhutto. Her husband and investment minister, Asif Ali

Zardari, was arrested earlier in the day along with 20 other members of her PPP. Mr. Zardari has allegedly been involved in a number of scandals. Ms. Bhutto "wants to meet with her party people, her central committee, the press, but she can't," said Aftab Sherpao, a PPP member and chief minister of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. Mr. Sherpao was stopped when he first approached the prime minister's gate, but soldiers later waved him through. The national assembly was dismissed along with Ms. Bhutto. "You know she's a fighter. She has faced adverse situations before," Mr. Sherpao said as he waited outside her lavish home on a hill overlooking the federal capital. Mr. Sherpao said Ms.

Bhutto had not decided whether to challenge her dismissal in the supreme court, but such a move seemed likely. Britain, India and the Commonwealth delivered identical messages after the ousting of Ms. Bhutto — her dismissal was an internal affair and not their concern. Even though the military has ruled Pakistan for 24 of its 49 years as an independent state, analysts did not expect them to take over again. "They would find it very difficult to control the country themselves and it would be like being handed a poisoned chalice," said Terry Taylor, assistant director of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. Britain, former colonial masters of Pakistan, took several hours to make any comment at all and then it was muted. "This is entirely a matter for Pakistan and we have no comment to make. We shall of course deal normally with the caretaker government of Meraj Khalid," a foreign office spokesman said. The Commonwealth, which mainly groups Britain's former colonies and protectorates, also adopted a "hands-off" approach. A spokesman for the Commonwealth Secretariat said: "This is strictly an internal matter for Pakistan. It is not something the Commonwealth will get involved in unless it was asked to."

Pakistani President Farooq Leghari (left) administers the oath of office to caretaker Prime Minister Meraj Khalid in Islamabad on Tuesday after sacking Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and her cabinet for alleged corruption and misrule (Reuters photo)

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Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda echoed this sentiment, saying in Harare: "We see these events as Pakistan's internal developments and are following them closely."

No deal will be signed if it covers only Hebron — PNA

HEBRON (Agencies) — Casting a pall on peace talks, a Palestinian National Authority (PNA) official said Tuesday that Yasser Arafat will not sign a deal on an Israeli pullout from Hebron unless Israel also makes good on an array of other unfulfilled commitments. PNA Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo said Israel must also agree to withdraw from more rural areas of the West Bank, release Palestinian prisoners, create a safe passage route between the West Bank and Gaza and honour other clauses in the autonomy accords signed last year.

"Last night, the Palestinian leadership sent a letter to the American administration stating our position," Mr. Abed Rabbo told the AP. "For any agreement with Israel, there must first be a guarantee of the commitments on the entire interim agreement."

Israel, whose new hard-line government is under pressure to establish its peace credentials, appears eager to implement the delayed pullout from Hebron, the last West Bank city under occupation. But the Palestinians' insistence on a broad package deal raises doubts about prospects for a speedy agreement. American Consul General Ed Abington said Monday a deal could be completed in a week, and some media reports said U.S. envoy Dennis Ross, who spent much of last month in the region trying to hammer out a Hebron deal, might return at on Wednesday. But Mr. Abed Rabbo said Mr. Ross "will not return unless there is real progress."

Israeli officials insist that disagreements over security and civilian arrangements in Hebron are minor and that the Palestinians have been holding up the deal. During a tour of Hebron Tuesday, Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai maintained agreement on Hebron "could have been signed some time ago."

"Those who are delaying are the Palestinian side," Mr. Mordechai said after meeting with Hebron Mayor Mustafa Nathe. Mr. Nathe said Israel must disarm the Jewish settlers, who have received arms from the Israeli military. Jewish settlers in the past few weeks have fired at stone-throwers and cursed Palestinian officials. One is to stand trial for beating a 10-year-old Palestinian boy to death. "We have shown the maximum flexibility in these negotiations and we can go no further," said Mr. Mordechai, who held separate talks with Jewish settlers and a Palestinian delegation which included Mayor Nathe.

Mr. Mordechai also said that the closure of the Palestinian territories, imposed in late October for fear of attack by militants, would stay in place. Mr. Abed Rabbo warned of an "explosion" if Israel continued to block an accord on the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron. "No progress has been made on the question of Hebron," he told reporters in Ramallah. If the negotiations do not succeed, "we will face an explosion."

"Instead of pursuing the peace process, Israel has decided on a policy of confrontation, on the ground by relaunching settlements (in Palestinian territories) and at the table by failing to respect past accords."

Weizman visit will help bilateral relations and peace process — Ambassador Shamir

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Shimon Shamir expressed confidence on Tuesday that Israeli President Ezer Weizman's visit today to the Kingdom would go a significant way in improving Jordanian-Israeli relations and reaffirm both sides' commitment to implementing the provisions of their 1994 peace treaty. Mr. Shamir, briefing the press ahead of the president's visit, also said the Jordanian and Israeli governments as well as businessmen were working closely ahead of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference to be held in Cairo in mid-November in terms of joint projects and business ventures.

"We are sure that the visit of the president will signal a new page in Jordanian-Israeli relations and the talks the president will have here will be helpful in advancing the Middle East peace process," he said. "I'm fully confident of the two countries' ability to overcome all differences," said the ambassador when asked whether Israel thought the crisis in ties with Jordan sparked by its unilateral moves in Arab Jerusalem in September. Jordan strongly protested Israel's failure to inform the Kingdom of its decision in late September to open a new entrance to a tunnel that runs near Islamic holy places in Arab Jerusalem, given the Jewish state's recognition of Jordan's "special role" vis-a-vis Islamic shrines in the Holy City.

Mr. Shamir defended the Israeli stand saying that the opening of a new entrance to the tunnel had "nothing to do with Islamic shrines in Jerusalem" and that it was aimed at facilitating the movement of tourists in the Old City. As such, he implied, Israel did not feel it should inform Jordan of the move. "There will be ups and downs in the relationship...everybody knows that any development in the West Bank will have its impact on Jordan...but both sides are fully committed to maintaining and building on the state of peace between them," said Mr. Shamir, adding that this was the fundamental basis for his confidence over the strength of the relationship. Mr. Shamir, who speaks fluent Arabic, said President Weizman and His

Majesty King Hussein would discuss the Middle East peace process as well as bilateral relations with a view to examining what could be done to advance the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, particularly on the Israeli-Palestinian track. The ambassador said Israel and the Palestinians were close to agreement on an Israeli deployment in the West Bank town of Hebron as called for in the Oslo accords. "Ninety-five per cent of the details of the agreement have been worked out and I expect an agreement to be signed in the next few days," he said, adding that no definite date or venue had been set for the signing ceremony. The ambassador also

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Hariri inches towards forming government

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese leaders have agreed on most of the members who will make up the new government but are still discussing the distribution of cabinet posts, political sources said on Tuesday.

They said a two-hour meeting at the presidential palace on Monday evening resolved differences over the composition of the new government between Prime Minister-elect Rafik Al Hariri and President Elias Hrawi.

The two leaders were to hold another meeting on Tuesday and the new government could be completed within days, the sources said.

It would comprise 30 members, like Mr. Hariri's outgoing government, and would be a compromise between Mr. Hariri's stated wish for a "homogeneous working team" and Mr. Hrawi's demand for inclusion of representatives from a broad political spectrum.

The sources said Mr. Hariri agreed on Monday that Mr. Hrawi, a Maronite Christian, should choose some of the Christian members of the new government which must be made up of Christians and Muslims on a 50-50 basis.

Mr. Hariri was originally expected to form the new government — his third since he took office in October 1992 — before the end of last week but his efforts ran into difficulties.

Mr. Hrawi's bid to impose

Christian politicians he considers more representative of the community ran counter to Mr. Hariri's aim of forming a government free of internal opposition to his policies which plagued his earlier cabinets.

Simultaneous attacks on Mr. Hariri by Druze leader Walid Junblatt, his former ally and a permanent fixture in the government, indicated that Mr. Hariri may not be as politically powerful as his success in recent parliamentary elections had indicated, political sources said.

"We cannot replace the absolute powers of the president with absolute powers of the prime minister," Mr. Junblatt declared at the weekend in a sharp attack on Mr. Hariri.

"We cannot accept a person who tells us: Either me or the (Lebanese) pound will collapse," he added.

Political sources said Mr. Hariri's emergence from the elections at the head of one of the strongest parliamentary blocs and his attempt to rush through the appointment of a cabinet tailored to his tastes may have caused concern that he was growing too powerful.

The sources said Syrian leaders, whose 35,000 troops in Lebanon make them the country's main power broker, may prefer to keep a balance between Lebanon's ruling trika — Mr. Hrawi, Mr. Hariri and parliament speaker Nabih Berri — rather than let Mr. Hariri become dominant.

Kuwaiti professor threatened with death for 'blasphemy'

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A Kuwaiti university professor who received an anonymous letter threatening to kill him for blasphemy said on Tuesday he would not allow the threat to disrupt his life.

"I am taking it seriously," said Ahmad Baghdadli, head of political science at Kuwait University, referring to a death threat he received after publishing an article about the Prophet Muhammad.

"I have to go to work, I have to take my children to school, I have to go to the supermarket to buy things. It is difficult to change your life because of a threat," Mr. Baghdadli told AFP, adding that the letter was being investigated by police.

The letter, sent anonymously to Mr. Baghdadli, accused him of blasphemy and said, "some day you will taste the cup of death and sooner than you think."

The letter, sent in October, added that "bullets will take you to another world."

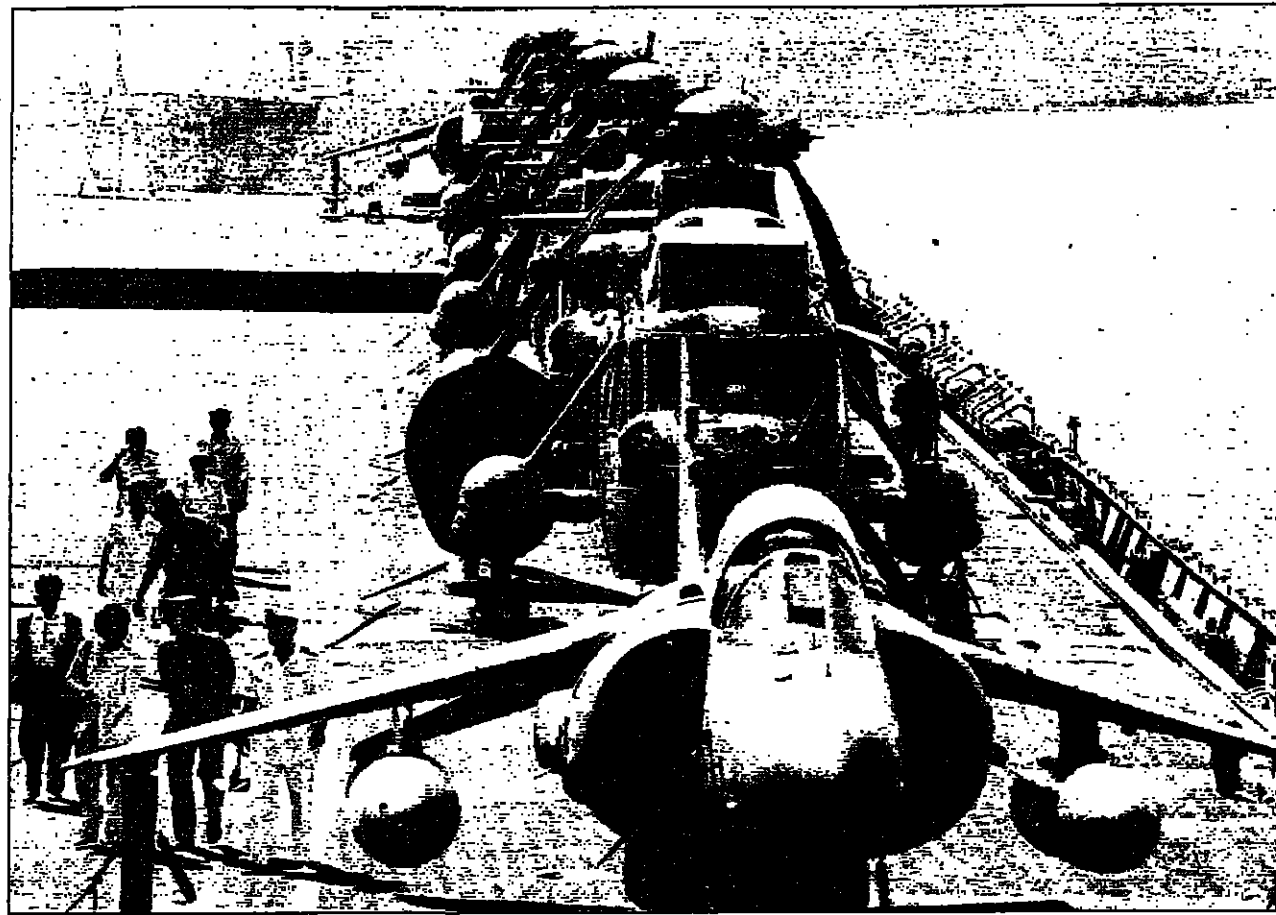
"As a Muslim, I believe in God. Anyone can die any time, any place, if God wants it," said Mr. Baghdadli.

The threat was prompted by an article published by Mr. Baghdadli in a students journal which said Prophet Muhammad "failed to impose Islam on the society of Mecca for 13 years" while the new religion was accepted by followers in Medina.

Mr. Baghdadli's opponents object to the use of the word "failed" when referring to the Prophet.

Mr. Baghdadli said the Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministry issued a religious ruling about the article saying Muslims should be more respectful of the Prophet.

A professor in the Islamic department of the university has threatened to launch a case against him in the religious courts, but Mr. Baghdadli said he had not heard anything from the courts.



Dubai-based reporters visit the British aircraft carrier, HMS Invincible, on its arrival in Port Rashid in Dubai on Tuesday for a four-day port of call visit. The ship forms part of the British naval presence in the Gulf and will be carrying out naval exercises with its allies in the region. HMS Invincible carries Harrier jets on board and the anti-submarine Sea King helicopter (Reuters photo)

Britain, UAE close to defence pact — Rifkind

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Britain is close to signing a defence pact with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to guard against potential Iranian and other threats in the Gulf, British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said Tuesday.

"There have been recent negotiations on a defence cooperation agreement. That is now on the verge of final agreement," Mr. Rifkind told a press conference here.

"I expect there to be a satisfactory outcome to that in a week or so," Mr. Rifkind said during a Middle East tour that began in Israel and will end in Yemen.

No details of the negotiations have been made available but Britain's defence pact, with Kuwait, which was signed after the 1991 Gulf war, calls for joint military exercises with host country forces.

Mr. Rifkind said negotiations for the defence pact with the UAE were not

motivated solely by tension between the UAE and Iran over the strategic Gulf islands of Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb.

"It's part of a much wider interest we have in the independence and integrity of the UAE," Mr. Rifkind said.

"Our links with this country go back over a hundred years. Although we have not had any constitutional responsibility since the independence of the UAE 25 years ago, we always remember our friends," he said.

Mr. Rifkind said he had talks with UAE officials about both Iran and Iraq, and the Middle East peace process.

He added that Abu Dhabi had taken a "very wise and constructive approach" to resolving its dispute with Iran over Abu Musa and the other islands by seeking to present its case to the International Court of Justice.

"We very much hope Iran

responds in a positive way," he added.

The UAE accuses Iran of a de facto annexation of the islands at the mouth of the world's busiest oil shipping lanes in violation of an agreement to administer them jointly. The issue has not been resolved.

During his visit here, Mr. Rifkind also spoke of Iran's programme to develop weapons of mass destruction, its opposition to the Middle East peace process, and its support for militants.

"We share the view of our hosts here with regard to the potential instability as a result of Iranian policy," Mr. Rifkind said.

The U.S. military, which is the largest allied power in the Gulf, describes Iraq as the short-term threat and Iran the long-term threat to regional stability.

When Mr. Rifkind arrived in the UAE from Israel on Monday, he proposed forming a regional body that

would help resolve conflicts which is modelled on the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The grouping would include all the nations of the Middle East, as well as hopefully eventually Iran and Iraq, along with the United States, France and Britain.

It was still too early to know how well the proposal is received but it has been welcomed by the Turkish authorities and by official Al Akhbar newspaper in Egypt, Mr. Rifkind said.

Apart from the defence pact, Britain is planning to deploy naval forces in the Gulf over the next few months to demonstrate its commitment to the defence of its Gulf allies.

They would join the U.S. Fifth Fleet, which deploys an aircraft carrier and around 20 other warships in the Gulf and Red Sea region.

Americans in S. Arabia warned of possible new attacks

RIYADH (AP) — The U.S. embassy is warning Americans in the kingdom to be vigilant against possible attacks in coming days.

A recorded advisory for Americans, updated Monday, warned that U.S. presidential elections on Tuesday and the first anniversary of a Nov. 13 car bombing of a U.S.-run military facility in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, could provide an excuse for more attacks on American interests in Saudi Arabia.

The Riyadh attack killed five Americans and two

Indians. Last June, a second bombing targeted a U.S. military housing complex near Dhahran, in eastern Saudi Arabia, killing 19 American servicemen and injuring scores.

"Elections in the United States... As well as the one-year anniversary of the bombing... In Riyadh could provide an excuse for terrorist groups to attack U.S. interests or facilities over the next seven to 10 days," the message said.

The advisory urged Americans in the kingdom to exercise "increased cau-

tion and vigilance."

Security for the estimated 40,000 Americans, including 5,000 military personnel, who live in Saudi Arabia has been a top priority in the wake of the two bombings.

In August, the Pentagon moved 4,000 Saudi-based troops to the remote Al Khari military base outside Riyadh in order to provide better security for them.

Militants opposed to the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia are believed to be behind the June attack near Dhahran.

Four Saudi men were convicted of carrying out the Riyadh bombing and were beheaded in May. Saudi authorities have provided few clues about the investigation into the Dhahran bombing.

Security sources have told the associated press that hundreds of suspects have been questioned and that dozens, including a group of Shiite Muslims, are in detention.

A foreign ministry source in Riyadh told the AP that the investigation was still ongoing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Netanyahu to make November 14-20 visit to U.S.

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to make a Nov. 14-20 visit to the United States, officials said Tuesday. During his stay in the United States, Mr. Netanyahu is to attend a meeting of major U.S. Jewish organisations in Seattle and an economic conference of top U.S. businessmen in Los Angeles, they said. The Israeli premier will also visit New York, where he will preside over a meeting of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, they said. The officials said no meetings had yet been scheduled with U.S. officials but the itinerary for the visit was still being worked out. According to the Maariv newspaper, Mr. Netanyahu will take some time out to do some skiing. After his return from the United States, the Israeli leader will visit Ireland, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union, and meet Irish Prime Minister John Bruton.

Court upholds fraud charges against Olmert

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's supreme court on Tuesday upheld fraud charges against Jerusalem Israeli mayor Ehud Olmert. The court rejected a petition by Mr. Olmert to quash the charges. Mr. Olmert had claimed the attorney general based his decision to prosecute him on the testimony of two unreliable witnesses. Mr. Olmert has denied wrongdoing in connection with a financial scandal dating back to the 1985 election campaign during which he served as treasurer of the Likud party. Mr. Olmert is suspected of having instructed an aide to offer Likud campaign contributors fake receipts stating their donations were payment for advertisement and therefore tax deductible. Last month, Mr. Olmert, who also is a Likud member of the 120-seat Knesset, relinquished his parliamentary immunity. After Tuesday's ruling, Mr. Olmert said he was still confident he would be acquitted. "We will go to court and I have no doubt that the judicial outcome in court, on the basis of the facts as we know them, will be to acquit me," he told Israeli radio.

Bahrain calls for Arab front against terrorism

CAIRO (AFP) — Bahraini Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa called on Arab countries to forge a common front against terrorism, in remarks published Tuesday by the Egyptian government daily Al Ahrar. "Terrorism is one of the attempts aimed at undermining development and that is why we call on the Arabs to rally together and confront it," the Bahraini prime minister said. He said his country backed efforts to hold an international conference to fight terrorism. At least 25 people have been killed in Bahrain since anti-government unrest erupted in December 1994 following the government's expulsion of Muslim Shiite religious leader Sheikh Ali Salman who headed a movement demanding the restoration of parliament — suspended by the authorities. Sheikh Khalifa said his country had been the victim of "terrorism planned and plotted abroad... in an attempt to disrupt development projects," turning to a territorial dispute with Qatar over control of the Hawar islands in the Gulf, he stressed that his country wanted to maintain good neighbourly relations with Qatar.

Kickbacks 'in U.S.' helicopter sale to Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police have opened an investigation into alleged kickbacks in a sale of U.S. Panther helicopters to the Israeli army, police sources said on Tuesday. Investigators suspect the army overpaid by \$10 million in the deal totalling \$60 million to buy five helicopters and that the surplus went into the pockets of Americans and Israelis who arranged the sale. An Israeli intermediary heading a company connected to Israel's defence ministry has been questioned several times in the investigation but has denied receiving any money, the sources said. U.S. authorities are also participating in the case, they said.

Briton gets 5 years in Kuwaiti prison

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A British businessman has been sentenced to five years in prison by a Kuwaiti court for a \$670,000 forgery, a newspaper and the British embassy said on Tuesday. Ian Beaumont was found guilty of forging a signature in order to illegally transfer 200,000 dinars (\$670,000) from the local account of a Lebanese businessman to his own Swiss account, the English-language Arab Times said. A British embassy official said the embas-

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:05Muppet Show
14:30Drama
15:00Pyramid
15:30Serie — Les Compagnons de L'Adventure
16:00 Doc. — Earth Revealed
16:30Blizzard Island
17:00News Flash
17:02The Adventures and Kelly
17:30Kelly
18:00Ushuaia
19:00Le Journal
19:15Magazine — Sports
19:30News Headlines
19:35The Four Seasons
20:00Super Stars of Action
20:30Challenges
21:10NBA
22:00News in English
22:25Drama — Bugs
23:15Hart to Hart
23:59Comedy — Who is the Boss?

PRAYER TIMES

04:33Fajr
05:52(Sunrise)Duba
11:19Dhuhr
14:20Asr
16:47Maghreb
18:08Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweileh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Fayed Dabbas759155

Dr. Adnan Zaghloul898140

Dr. Mazen Nballi830435

Dr. Fakher Bilbeisi663412

Firas pharmacy661912

Ferdows pharmacy890280

Al Asema pharmacy637055

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Nairoukh pharmacy623672

Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484

Al Quds pharmacy(-)

ZARQA:

Dr. Mazen Saffarini985832

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192. 621111.

Deserts9/22

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Relative cold weather conditions will prevail with a chance for scattered showers.

Skies will be partly cloudy and winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman10/19

Aqaba15/26

Deserts9/22

Jordan Valley14/26

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 26 Humidity readings: Amman 63 per cent, Aqaba 60 per cent.

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muassher Hospital 6672279

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muassher 77101/3

Al-Bashir775111/26

Army, Marka891611/5

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied

by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)

Flights

07:35Larnaca (RJ)

08:35Jeddah (RJ)

08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

08:55Damascus (RJ)

14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:25Toronto, Montreal (RJ)

16:35Frankfurt (RJ)

16:45Istanbul (RJ)

17:05Paris (RJ)

17:45Madrid, Geneva (RJ)

17:50Brussels, Vienna (RJ)

18:10London, Berlin (RJ)

18:35Rome (RJ)

Queen visits Madaba Mosaic School...

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday toured the Madaba Mosaic School, which she opened last November upon her inauguration of the Madaba Archaeological Park, according to a Royal Court Statement.

The Queen also attended a workshop on the restoration of the sixth century Madaba mosaic map, a replica of which will be exhibited next September in Amman, Cairo and Jerusalem as part of an international colloquium and lecture series commemorating the map's century.

She also inspected the Madaba School's mosaic restoration projects in the Church of the Apostles,

which has one of the best dated and signed figurative mosaic pavements of sixth century Madaba.

The Queen expressed the country's pride in the meticulous high standard set by the students and graduates of the Madaba School, which has evolved into an "artistic and cultural haven," adding that their fine work will open different career opportunities and contribute to Jordan's contemporary cultural and artistic movement, the statement said.

The Mosaic School, a cooperative project between Italy and Jordan, was founded in 1991 by the Franciscan Archaeological Institute of

Mt. Nebo to train local mosaic conservators and artists and is located within the Archaeological Park.

The school comprises four renovated buildings and is the only secondary school in Jordan and the Middle East to specialise in conservation and restoration, the statement said.

It offers an annual three-year course to 15 students who are eligible upon the completion of the tenth grade and has developed joint training programmes with Jordan and Yarmouk universities.

The school, which has granted 7 scholarships in the last four years, is currently working with the ministry

on an additional work-study programme whereby students may receive a diploma in addition to their Tawjihi certification.

The Queen was received by Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat, Director of the Department of Antiquities Ghazi Bisheh, Italian Ambassador Francesco Cerulli, Michele Piccirillo of the Franciscan Archaeological Institute of Mt. Nebo, Governor of Madaba Abdel Karim Mallameh, School Director George Iskandar and the Italian Coordinator's Consultant Maysoun Khouri.

... and later meets with UNU/ILA director

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday met with the newly-appointed Director of the United Nations University's International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA) Professor Adel Safy to discuss the programme of the Academy's first annual session scheduled to begin next summer.

According to a Royal Court statement, the session will include workshops and interactive discussions

between distinguished keynote speakers and 50 other participants — "fellows" selected from 5 continents — on topics such as peace and security, leadership and civil society, sustainable development, global economics, culture and religion.

The programme will also include one week of travel in the region, the statement said.

The Queen said that His Majesty King Hussein, who

expressed Jordan's support of the Academy last October at the U.N. General Assembly, embodies the ideals of "leadership, commitment and humanity...which the UNU/ILA hopes to share with its fellows."

The UNU/ILA was launched last year by the Queen and Secretary General of the United Nations Dr. Boutros Ghali Friday at the U.N. Headquarters in New York on the occasion of the U.N.'s 50th anniversary cel-

ebrations and will be based in Amman as well as the first global leadership training facility.

According to the statement, it will also be the first U.N. institution to be initiated and established in the Middle East.

Attending the meeting were Advisor to the Rector of the United Nations University Abdul Salam Majali and the Queen's Liaison Officer for UNU/ILA Basma Lozi.

Physicians dissatisfied with 'minimal' pay raises

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Many physicians have criticised the memorandum of understanding recently signed between the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) and the government and are continuing their earlier demands for higher salaries and additional allowances, sources at the JMA said Tuesday.

"The increase (in salaries) provided for by the agreement is judged by a large majority of physicians as minimal," JMA President Bassam Dajani told the Jordan Times, adding that such increase amounts to "only JD30 a month" for many medical professions.

The memorandum of understanding, signed on Oct. 19, averted a projected sit-in and a possible strike planned by the JMA to press their demands for higher salaries and better working conditions for physicians employed in the

public sector, but, nevertheless, it seems to have left many JMA members dissatisfied.

According to press reports, the memorandum stipulated a 30 to 60 per cent raise in the overtime allowance granted to physicians and dentists, and it called for increases in overtime allowances for several other medical professions, such as nurses, midwives, pharmacists and veterinarians.

Dr. Dajani, who signed the agreement together with Minister of Health Aref Bataineh and Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser, said he considered the memorandum "a first step to be followed by further measures aimed at obtaining more benefits in the future," but admitted that many doctors employed in the public sector "want to reject it."

Confirming local press reports that 700 physicians have signed a petition asking for an extraordinary general assembly of the

association, Dr. Dajani said that, however, "no official request (for such a special session) has yet been forwarded before the JMA board."

Nonetheless, "an extraordinary general assembly could be summoned in the next two weeks," he said, adding that many doctors are (still) "strongly supporting the idea of an open strike."

Meanwhile, another storm seems likely to hit the JMA in the near future.

A report by a special committee appointed by the prosecutor general to investigate irregularities in the JMA's Pension and Social Security Fund is expected to be released in two months, Dr. Dajani said.

Investigations by the prosecutor general started after a report covering the fund's activities from 1989 to 1994 and released last summer uncovered "inefficient financial management, failure to abide by accounting rules, corrup-

tion, speculation and abuse of funds."

Media sources quoted the report as showing that the JMA's Pension and Social Security Fund sustained a loss of JD1.3 and JD2.2 million respectively in 1994 and 1995 "as a result of faulty investments."

Media reports also stated that records of the revenues and expenses for West Bank physicians indicated a gap of JD37,270, while two cheques totalling JD 33,000 were issued to West Bank doctors without a JMA board approval.

Commenting on the case, Dr. Dajani said "some of the (JMA) accountants have been involved in mis-managing and mishandling of Pension and Social Security Fund's money."

"Now everything is in the prosecutor general's hands," he said, adding that "it is possible, for the time being, to quantify the fund's losses due to corruption, speculation or abuse."

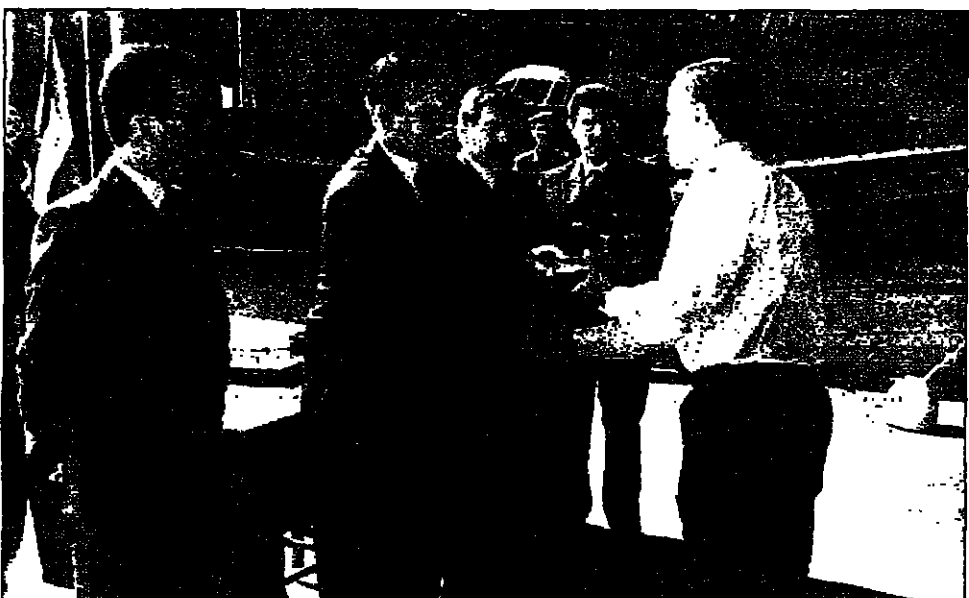
Royal Air Academy certifies trainees

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Air Academy (RAA) Tuesday certified a group of 53 trainees from Jordan and seven additional countries who completed their 18-month training courses on flying commercial aircraft.

HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein attended the graduation ceremony and presented wings and diplomas to the graduates who hailed from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Sudan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

During the ceremony, the Prince also distributed meritorical certificates to veteran staff who have been with the academy for at least 20 years.

Addressing the graduation ceremony, RAA Director General Mohammad Khawaldeh said that the graduates received their training in English, attended 700 hours of lectures and flew for 170 hours in single-engine training planes as



HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein Tuesday presents wings and diplomas to graduates from the Royal Air Academy (Petra photo)

well as flying 30 hours in double-engine planes and participating in 50 hours of simulator training.

According to Mr.

Khawaldeh, the academy, which was founded in 1971, aims to transform itself into a full-fledged civil aviation university and the RAA

board has given its consent for the purchase of a number of modern training aircraft to augment its present ten aircraft fleet and simulator.

JD15 m hotel to open on the Dead Sea

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A new JD15 million hotel will open at the beginning of 1999 in the Suwaymeih development area on the Dead Sea shore, according to a press release issued Tuesday by the Amman Marriott Hotel.

The hotel, owned by the Business Tourism Company (BTC), will include health and medical facilities along with suites and deluxe chalets and will be managed by Marriott International.

In a signing ceremony yesterday with Marriott International representatives, BTC Chairman Nadim Muasher said construction works are scheduled to start "in the middle of" next year.

On behalf of Marriott International, Vice President for International Hotel Development Bart Carnham

and Director of the Legal Department William Tennis signed the agreement with Mr. Muasher, confirming Marriott's management of the new Dead Sea resort.

According to a press statement, the project will be located on a 63-dunum area allocated by the Jordan Valley Authority especially for tourism development purposes.

The project, drawn up by the British firm HOK Int'l in coordination with Ja'afar Toukan & partners, based in Jordan, envisages "a garden frame to create a relaxed atmosphere including elements of Jordan's historic and cultural heritage," the statement said.

It also said that the resort is aimed at attracting "internal tourism, as the resort will offer all that is needed to enhance... family tourism and its development in Jordan."

Seminar to look at Arab perspective of peace process

By Sacha Baggili
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The International Press Institute (IPI) will hold a seminar entitled "An Evaluation of the Peace Process (An Arab Perspective)" here Saturday designed to acquaint members of the Vienna-based, worldwide media organisation with "An Arab View of the Middle East Peace Process."

The seminar will take place on the second day of the IPI's annual conference to be held in Amman and will be a continuation of a similar seminar held in Israel last year, which gave members of the IPI an insight into the Israeli perspective of the regional political circumstances and therefore further enrich the understanding of the worldwide media of this subject, Nabil Sharif, editor-in-chief of Al-Dustour Arabic daily and presenter of a welcoming address told the Jordan Times.

Statements will be made by guest speakers under the topical headings of "Challenges for the Middle East," "The most urgent needs of the Palestinian people," "The development of independent media in the region," and "The development of independent media in Jordan."

The guest speakers include past and present government officials from around the region, such as First Under Secretary to the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Osama Baz, former Prime Minister of Jordan Abdul Salam Majali and Assistant Under Secretary to the Ministry of Economy and Trade of the Palestinian National Authority Samir Huleileh.

Representatives from the United Nations and the Union of Arab Journalists will also take part in the seminar.

Discussions will be chaired by members of the IPI Peter Preston, chairman of the IPI and editorial director of the Guardian Media Group in London, and Johannes Gross, vice-chairman of the IPI and a Cologne-based columnist.

Seminar covers safe fertiliser usage

AMMAN (Petra) — On the second of a three-day symposium on use of fertilisers to achieve sustainable agricultural development, participants Tuesday reviewed national policies in Jordan and Egypt and their impact on the cost and marketing of fertilisers.

Assembled at the Jerusalem Hotel, participants from thirteen countries reviewed reports on appropriate usage of organic and chemical fertilisers in increasing food production, representative of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Dr. Ghassan Hamdallah said.

The U.N. agency organised the meeting in conjunction with the Arab Federation of Chemical Fertilisers (AFCF).

Also discussed was: different types of fertilisers suitable for varying Middle Eastern climates, regional and international cooperation with national authorities and agricultural extension services to guide farmers in safe fertiliser usage.

Dr. Hamdallah informed the opening session Monday that the Middle East faces serious challenges due to water shortages and that 70 per cent of the region is arid or desertified with very few water resources.

He noted that the countries of the region used a combined total of 500,000 tonnes of fertilisers in 1961 but added that demand for the commodity rose to eight million tonnes in 1994 to accommodate the growing population's food needs.

Aside from fertiliser usage, the reports are focusing on the effects of fertilisers on the climate, the effects of agricultural policies on production and modern techniques for increasing food production through the use of fertilisers.

The countries attending the meeting, opened by Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat are Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Cyprus and a number of regional organisations.

Islamic Bank signs \$25 million loan agreement with ministry

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Islamic Bank Tuesday signed a \$25 million loan agreement with the Ministry of Supply to partially cover the cost of wheat imports.

Minister of Supply Munir Sobar signed the deal with the bank's General Manager Mousa Shehadeh and said at the signing ceremony that the deal demonstrates cooperation between the public and private sectors in meeting national economy requirements.

"The loan will be used to pay the cost of a consignment of 150,000 tonnes of

wheat whose prices on the international markets have declined recently," the minister said.

He said that the ministry will be paying \$165 for a tonne of wheat and is enthusiastic about the opportunity to purchase this grain at reduced prices on world markets.

Mr. Sobar had earlier announced that Jordan consumes an annual 680,000 tonnes of wheat and further stated that the ministry awarded a tender to a Jordanian merchant to purchase the 150,000 tonnes from the United States.

He said that the first shipment would arrive within the first three months of next year.

"This is not the first time that the ministry cooperates with the Islamic Bank for food supply purchases as the bank also financed ministry food purchases for the past three years, totalling \$250 million," Mr. Sobar stated.

Under the terms of the agreement, the ministry will be paying for the loan in six monthly instalments, after a six-month grace period.

UNRWA to receive \$7.3 m grant from Japan

AMMAN (Petra) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is scheduled to receive a \$7.3 million grant from Japan to partially finance the agency's food programmes for needy Palestinian refugees, according to an agreement signed at the UNRWA head-office in Wadi Seer Tuesday.

According to UNRWA, these refugees constitute five per cent of the total number of registered refugees.

UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen and Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Takayuki Kimura signed the deal previous to their joint inauguration of the agency's new headquarters at the UNRWA complex to serve as the new agency's headquarters.

The new building was financed through another Japanese grant, totalling \$2 million to the agency to cover the cost of new buildings at the agency's headquarters in Amman and Gaza.

Japan, which last year granted UNRWA \$30 million, is the agency's largest donor.

Mr. Hansen thanked Japan for its contributions including the Wadi Seer building which cost \$600,000.

During a tour of the complex, Mr. Kimura said his government plans to increase its donations to the Palestinians through the UNRWA or the Palestinian National Authority, noting that Japan will announce the new sum at the coming UNRWA donors meeting to be held in Amman next month.

Tour guides to undergo additional training

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is training tourist guides in order to provide them with increased skills and information, Minister of Tourism Saleh Irsheidat said Tuesday.

Addressing a general meeting of the Tourist Guides Association at the Amman Regency Hotel, the minister said that the ministry is in the process of upgrading and modernising tourist-related regulations in order to prepare for new developments in regional and international tourist activities.

"The role of a tourist guide is essential to the tourism industry as he or she provides necessary information about the Kingdom's history, past civilisations and achievements," Dr. Irsheidat said.

He stressed that tourist guides' behaviour, education and services are equally important factors for a successful tourist industry.

Dr. Irsheidat affirmed that his ministry is ready to help the association promote its programmes while protecting member interests.

During the meeting, attended by Ministry Secretary General Akram Masarweh, the tourist guides presented their own requests especially in matters connected with work distribution in different areas of the Kingdom.

Their petition also covered aspects related to the association and the provision of facilities and tourist services at archaeological sites.

The minister replied that his ministry has been conducting a study on the provision of utilities and services at archaeological sites.

This was the second meeting organised by the ministry to discuss means of stimulating the tourism industry which has suffered a recent decline, attributed to political conflict in the

Middle East.

Dr. Irsheidat Sunday met with representatives of tourist and travel agencies to announce a "Discover Jordan" programme designed to boost the industry.

One phase of the programme entails reducing transportation rates and hotel fares both of which, in the past few months, have witnessed a great number of reservation cancellations. Meanwhile, the director of the tourism and archaeology department at the ancient Nabatean city of Petra enumerated that 37,400 tourists visited the ancient city in October altogether paying JD 710,525.

Department Director Suleiman Farajat also stated that the total number of tourists visiting Petra in the first 10 months of this year was 321,297 who contributed JD5,742,205.

In the same period last year a total of 276,472 tourists visited Petra.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

"Northanger Abbey" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

LECTURE

"The Development of Arabic Dictionaries" by George Abdul Masih at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

POLITICAL SEMINAR

"Political seminar discussing 'theoretical frameworks for political party concepts and women's status and participation in party politics' at the headquarters of the Progress and Justice Party, off Third Circle, Jabal Amman (6:00 p.m. — 8:00 p.m.)."



U.S. marines prepare to advance after their amphibious landing crafts hit the beach near Pohang during the joint U.S.-Korean Foe Eagle amphibious assault Tuesday. While the massive exercise took place on the east coast, South Korean soldiers exchanged fire with two North Korean infiltrators several hundred kilometres away. Foe Eagle is an annual exercise to train against possible North Korean attacks (Reuters photo)

Burmese authorities confirm weekend detentions of opposition supporters

RANGOON (AFP) — Burmese officials confirmed Tuesday that 12 people were detained during the weekend near the home of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, but released a day later.

A senior intelligence officer told AFP that the 12 people — part of a crowd of several hundred who had gathered near Ms. Suu Kyi's home — had been detained for a day as "they had been unruly and refused to leave the area."

Diplomats said Monday the 12 were picked up after supporters of Ms. Suu Kyi scuffled with alleged infiltrators after the opposition leader was prevented for a sixth consecutive weekend from holding a rally at her home.

The intelligence official said those detained were "from the weekend group," but would not confirm if there had been any fighting.

He declined to comment on whether police had infiltrated the opposition ranks at the gathering.

Eyewitnesses told AFP that those detained included Buddhist monks who had positioned themselves between security officers and supporters of Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD).

The incident occurred as NLD activists apparently scuffled with men in civilian dress they suspected of being government infiltrators.

The authorities have for six consecutive weeks prevented Ms. Suu Kyi from addressing her supporters at the weekend rallies she has been holding regularly since her release from six years of house arrest in July 1995.

On Saturday, NLD supporters heading for Ms. Suu Kyi's compound were turned away, but the opposition leader left her compound briefly to where they had gathered and called on them to remain patient.

Security forces later erected roadblocks on either side of her residence, and on Sunday riot police moved NLD supporters away from the area.

Ms. Suu Kyi had addressed supporters every Saturday and Sunday since her release from six years of house arrest in July 1995 until authorities mounted a blockade of the approaches to her house ahead of a planned NLD congress in late September.

The blockade was lifted last week, but was reinstated Saturday after Ms. Suu Kyi left her compound to speak to supporters. The blockade was still in place Tuesday, although it appeared the opposition leader was still free to travel around Rangoon.

Hashimoto ponders cabinet line-up

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto pondered cabinet appointments Tuesday and pundits wondered whether key portfolios would go to ruling party old guard or more reform-minded politicians.

Mr. Hashimoto is expected to be formally re-elected as prime minister in a special session of parliament Thursday and to finalise his cabinet line-up shortly thereafter.

His conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was forced to cobble together a loose alliance with its two partners in the outgoing ruling coalition after falling 12 seats short of a majority in an Oct. 20 lower house election. The LDP has also won the backing of several independent.

Mr. Hashimoto, a former tough-talking trade minister who took over as prime minister in January, looked set to confirm later Tuesday that two top LDP executives, including Secretary-General Koichi Kato, would keep their jobs, clearing the way for intra-party jockeying over cabinet posts.

Mr. Kato's reappointment was seen as critical to maintaining the LDP's fragile alliance with the Social Democrats and the tiny Sakigake Party after those two parties shied away from joining an LDP-led coalition cabinet, analysts said.

Among the names floated for key portfolios were former LDP executive Hiroshi Mitsuoka, head of the LDP's second biggest faction and a former trade, transport and foreign minister.

Domestic media said Mr. Mitsuoka was a possible contender for powerful economic portfolios including finance minister, as was Shizuka Kamei, an outspoken former transport minister who currently heads the LDP's press office.

Analysts saw a certain aptitude in Mr. Kamei might win the finance post, given his opposition earlier to a rise in the three-per cent sales tax to five per cent from next April.

The tax increase has been approved, but the LDP, the Social Democrats and Sakigake agreed last week to review it and the whole tax system as part of a policy pact that forms the basis for their loose cooperation.

"Putting the biggest opponent (of a policy) in a position where he can no longer oppose it is a time-honoured tactic," one political analyst said.

Whoever becomes finance minister faces a tough agenda, including implementing the sales tax increase, determining the need for a stimulative extra budget for the current fiscal year, and crafting the 1997/98 budget.

Observers say Romania vote fair

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Observers from the Council of Europe who monitored weekend elections in Romania that brought the opposition to power said Tuesday that the vote was "correct" and marked the country's "adherence to democracy."

However the monitors cited some technical irregularities due to an inadequate and regrettable lack of information and instruction. They noted in particular a shortage of voter bulletins in some polling stations.

The elections Sunday represented a victory for the anti-Communist opposition, which won a majority in parliament and whose candidate, Emil Constantinescu, came a close second to incumbent Ion Iliescu in the first round of the presidential vote.

The latest partial results Tuesday gave Mr. Constantinescu's Democratic Convention Party 30 per cent of the vote and its fellow opposition parties and potential coalition partners — the Social Democratic Union and the Democratic Union of Magyars — respectively 13 per cent and seven per cent.

In the presidential poll, Mr. Iliescu won 32.5 per cent, while Mr. Constantinescu garnered 27.5 per cent, according to the Tuesday figures.

Observers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in a preliminary report, also said the elections had taken place "freely and, in general, correctly."

The opposition and the Ruling Social Democratic Party (PDSR) have exchanged accusations of fraud in the election and the central election commission has also cited a number of irregularities.

However it has said that these do not undermine the legitimacy of the polls.

The Romanian press hailed the results Tuesday as a "vote for change."

The independent daily Adevarul said the electorate had "voted massively for change and against the current regime, which has shown itself to be damaging for the country."

The Cronica Romana newspaper added that "the electorate had every right to expect an improvement in their standard of living and, since the PDSR did not satisfy this expectation, Romanians voted for change."

The mass-circulation Evenimentul Zilei was more cautious, however.

"We cannot speak of a true change until after the second round of the presidential election... when we will see whether or not Mr. Iliescu will remain president of Romania."

While Mr. Iliescu, a former Communist who has ruled since 1989, came first Sunday, his opponent Mr. Constantinescu is likely to win the support of former Prime Minister Petre Roman, who came in third, in the second round Nov. 17.

Life on Earth began 400 million years earlier than thought — magazine

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — A rock formation discovered in Greenland shows life has existed on Earth for at least 3.85 billion years, or 400 million years earlier than previously thought.

In the Nov. 7 issue of Nature, scientists said rocks formations found on Akilia Island in southern west Greenland analysed at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) support the finding, according to the latest issue of Nature magazine.

Participating in the research were scientists from the University of California's San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCLA Department of Earth and Space Sciences, the Australian National University and England's Oxford Brookes University.

"Our evidence establishes beyond reasonable doubt that life emerged on Earth at least 3.85 billion years ago, and this is not the end of the story," said Scripps' Stephen Mojzsis who authored the article. "We may well find that life existed even earlier."

The carbon inclusions in the rock were analyzed with UCLA's high-resolution ion microscope — an instrument that enables scientists to learn the exact composition of samples.

The form of life discovered was probably a simple micro-organism, although its actual shape or nature cannot be ascertained, Mr. Mojzsis said, because heat and pressure over time have destroyed those traits.

The previous earliest evidence for life was presented by UCLA paleobiologist William Schopf who showed that a bacteria-like fossil much like modern "pond scum" existed on Earth 3.46 billion years ago.

"Life is tenacious, and it completely permeates the surface layer of the planet," Mr. Mojzsis said, adding that evidence of life's origins could well be further out in the universe.

"We find life beneath the deepest ocean, on the highest mountain, in the driest desert and the coldest glacier, and deep down in the crustal rocks and sediments."

"Not knowing what conditions are needed for the emergence of life, it is only possible to speculate about its existence elsewhere in the universe, Mojzsis.

"An important contribution to the solution of this problem could come from exploration of the surface of Mars for traces there of extinct life."

S. Korean troops kill two Northern agents from sub

SEOUL (R) — South Korean troops Tuesday killed two North Korean agents who had been on the run since landing in the South by submarine in September, but lost three men in a fierce gunbattle, officials said.

The two agents were among 26 North Koreans whose submarine ran aground off the eastern city of Kangnung on Sept. 17, a military spokesman said.

"Our troops killed two members of the enemy's reconnaissance team after fierce exchanges of gunfire with the armed infiltrators on the hills" of Inje near the east coast, spokesman Kang Joong-Kwon said.

Two South Korean officers and a soldier were also killed when the North Korean agents opened fire with M-16 automatic rifles and hurled grenades at pursuing South Korean troops near the border with the Communist North, Seoul officials said.

Eight other South Korean soldiers were wounded.

With the latest deaths, only one of the original 26 infiltrators remains at large. "So far 13 (North Koreans) have been shot dead and one captured. Eleven others killed themselves," Mr. Kang said.

Mr. Kang did not say how the two fugitive North Koreans were identified but one senior officer said Lee Kwang-Soo, the captured North Korean, was sent to the scene to name them.

The Shark-class submarine ran aground off Kangnung as it tried to pick up three spies it offloaded two days earlier, according to Mr. Lee. Mr. Kang said the two killed Tuesday were among the three spies.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said the infiltrators were wearing South Korean military uniforms and carried the kind of rifles used in the South.

"But they used bullets which did not carry serial numbers. All ammunition used by our side bear serial numbers," he said.

South Korean Special Forces had been combing the rugged east coast mountains just south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) since Monday when the two infiltrators fled after being stopped by southern soldiers, he said.

The DMZ was set up between the two Koreas under the 1953 armistice agreement which ended the three-year Korean War. The two Koreas are still technically at war.

Tension has remained high on the peninsula, the world's last cold war frontier, since the stranded submarine was spotted by an alert taxi driver in Kangnung.

Tuesday's gunfire exchange occurred as the United States and South Korea continued a two-week military training exercise to develop defences against any attack from the Communist North.

Rear Admiral Charles Moore, commander of the U.S. aircraft carrier Independence, said last week South Korea faced the threat of submarine saboteurs, but Washington would send aircraft to defend it if war broke out on the peninsula.

The exercise, called Foe Eagle '96, involves about 34,000 U.S. troops including 10,000 seamen from the U.S. Seventh Fleet, and most of South Korea's 655,000 military personnel.

Seoul has demanded a "clear apology" from Pyongyang over the submarine incursion. North Korea has threatened to retaliate "a hundredfold or a thousandfold" over the killings and requested the return of the bodies, the survivors and the submarine.

Asia offers muted response to Bhutto's fall

HONG KONG (R) — Asian countries offered a muted response to the fall of Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Tuesday, with most countries saying her sacking by the nation's president would not alter bilateral ties.

Senior officials from India, Pakistan's neighbour and sometime foe, described Ms. Bhutto's firing as an internal affair. One said the move appeared to have the blessing of the army which, he added, opposed a militarist approach to New Delhi.

"Basically the situation will not affect us in any important way," an interior ministry said.

In a blistering indictment of Ms. Bhutto's rule, Pakistan President Farooq Leghari accused her government of corruption, undermining the judiciary and failing to stop extrajudicial killings in Karachi and elsewhere. He appointed an interim prime minister and ordered elections on Feb. 3.

Japan, Pakistan's main aid donor for years, said it was waiting for the situation to become clearer before commenting.

"We are waiting until the situation becomes clearer before issuing a statement," a Foreign Ministry spokesman told Reuters.

Japan has been providing just over half of the total foreign aid received by Pakistan. In 1996, it extended \$542 million in loans to Pakistan, mainly yen-grants for development projects, and about \$70 million in direct aid, Japanese officials said.

Senior members of an Indian delegation in Zimbabwe with Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda told an Indian news agency the sacking was an internal affair.

But one official source in the delegation told India's Asian News International (ANI) agency the democratic process had been "clearly thwarted" with the government's dismissal.

Most other regional countries had no immediate response.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman in Bangladesh, which won its independence from Pakistan in 1971, said: "It's an internal matter of Pakistan. We are watching developments... But they have nothing to do with our bilateral relations with Islamabad."

South Korea's relations with Pakistan were unlikely to be affected, government sources in Seoul said.

"We have no plan to issue an official comment on the dismissal... Since it is Pakistan's internal political matter," a Foreign Ministry official said.

"We are not expecting any impact by the situation on the relationship between two countries," the official told Reuters.

South Korean industry sources said investments would also not be affected by the sacking. Trade between South Korea and Pakistan currently totals \$600 million.

"We think it will not affect us in any way," said a spokesman with Daewoo Corp, which has won some \$1.15 billion worth of construction deals from the Pakistan government.

But the upheaval may not be without impact.

Indonesian palm oil traders expressed concern, saying it could hit future sales to the country, a significant importer of palm oil from both Indonesia and Malaysia.

"I will be extra cautious when dealing with private Pakistani buyers because problems over payments could arise if there is unrest there," one senior trader said.

The dismissal could also have important ramifications for Afghanistan's Taleban militia, now locked in war with a northern alliance, Afghan Watchers said.

They said despite Islamabad's regular denials of any support to any factions in Afghanistan's civil war, few people in Kabul doubted that Pakistani support for the Taleban was wide-ranging.

"Politically and militarily, Ms. Bhutto's government has stood firmly beside the Taleban. The evidence is overwhelming," said one veteran Afghan Watcher who asked not to be identified.

"What we are all going to be looking at now is whether the divisions within the Pakistani establishment over Afghan policy will come into the open now that Benazir has gone," he said. Pakistan has consistently denied it provides military or other support to the Taleban, saying it has no favourites among Afghan factions, most of whom it helped during the struggle against Soviet occupation in the 1980s.

China: Taiwan key issue at talks with U.S.

BEIJING (R) — China said Tuesday the key issue for Beijing at arms proliferation talks with the United States was the U.S. sale of weapons to Taiwan.

The U.S. had exported large numbers of advanced weapons to Taiwan and Beijing hoped Washington would pay attention to its concerns, Foreign Ministry spokesman Cui Tiankai told reporters.

"The most sensitive and important issue is that the United States has violated the Aug. 17 communiqué by exporting large numbers of advanced weapons to Taiwan," Mr. Cui said.

Under the Aug. 17, 1982 communiqué, the U.S. pledged to reduce the quality and quantity of arms sales to Taiwan.

The spokesman made the

remarks as U.S. Undersecretary of State Lynn Davis was holding talks with Chinese negotiators on a range of arms proliferation issues.

Officials have said Ms. Davis would discuss how the two countries might implement a decade-old peaceful nuclear cooperation accord that would allow U.S. firms to sell nuclear power reactors to China.

The pact has not been put into effect because of Washington's concerns that Beijing has sold nuclear technology to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in other nations, most recently to Pakistan.

Both China and Pakistan deny the charges.

Ms. Davis said Tuesday she was encouraged by

H. Kong 1997 ceremony proves tough to negotiate

HONG KONG (AFP) — Preparations for an extravagant series of parties to mark Hong Kong's handover to China got underway Tuesday, with organisers outlining a series of fireworks, parades and variety events on and before the night of June 30, 1997.

But as with so many more substantive issues related to the transition, negotiations involving the event are proving more complicated than originally foreseen.

The shows will be coordinated by the pro-China Association for Celebration of Reunification of Hong Kong, officially set up Tuesday.

Rita Fan, vice chairman of the 1,500-strong member association, said the events were meant to showcase to the world "Hong Kong's harmonious image" as it reverts to Chinese rule. At present, four major events are planned including a fireworks display, a variety show, and float parade, she said.

However, Ms. Fan said the association has had difficulty in finding venues for some large-scale events. Negotiations with the Hong Kong government — which has had bitter rows with China since 1992 — had produced no agreement so far, she said.

Ms. Fan said the association was willing to change venues or dates to avoid conflicts with the government's own plans for the handover.

Meanwhile, Zhou Nan, director of the Hong Kong branch

of Xinhua News Agency, China's de facto government representative in the territory, said in his speech at the inauguration of the association that he believed the group could "mobilise all resources and masses" to mark the transition with "colourful" activities.

He said the celebrations must "promote the bright future ahead for Hong Kong" with a smooth transition, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Zhou said the celebrations would also "herald the starting point of a much bigger prosperous development for Hong Kong under the 'one country, two systems' policy. China's label for the agreement under which the territory will keep its capitalist system for 50 years after the handover.

Lu Ping, head of Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of China's State Council, said in his message to the association that "Hong Kong's tomorrow will be better."

In September, Britain and China officially signed an accord to hold a joint ceremony marking the formal transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule at midnight on June 30, following months of wrangling over how the handover would be marked.

Under the accord, the ceremony will be attended by 4,000 people and will be "solemn and dignified," according to British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind.

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Pursuit of sound concept

A PROPOSAL, originally made and consistently advocated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, to set up a Middle Eastern umbrella organisation that can help resolve conflicts, ensure security and encourage cooperation among countries of the region received an important boost when the British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, in a speech in Abu Dhabi Monday, recognised its contents as "particularly stimulating."

In an article he wrote for the Times of London (which is reprinted on this page today), Mr. Rifkind says Britain is discussing with her friends in the region and internationally the idea of launching what might be called an Organisation for Cooperation in the Middle East (OCME).

In his new endeavour, the foreign secretary will no doubt turn to the Crown Prince who has put together a wealth of research, vision and international contacts on the need to launch a process for security and cooperation in this part of the world over the past several years.

Prince Hassan has repeatedly stressed that the complexity of the sources of conflict and challenges facing the countries of the region make it inevitable for them to devise coherent and institutional mechanisms for joint action. The Crown Prince's vision for a framework in which to achieve this goal drew on the Kingdom's long-standing view of regional security as a multi-component concern that goes beyond the military aspect. Regional security can only be achieved if appropriate attention is given to the human and social dimensions. Jordan has always maintained. The security structure which Jordan has persistently advocated is an inclusive forum that can, and must, tackle such vital issues as socio-economic development, energy, water, the environment, refugees and human rights.

Through the exercise of translating the security and cooperation process into a conference or an organisation as the Europeans in fact did first with the CSCE and later the OSCE, which can indeed involve peripheral and extra regional states, countries of the region should be able to address and adapt to each other's interests through a cooperative interaction. That will eventually lead to a regional environment free from economic and political pressures as a result of resolving fundamental conflicts. No state will thus feel threatened, and the ground will be paved for a regional development process in which cooperation replaces rivalry and confidence replaces suspicions.

This in essence is the message which the Crown Prince carried with him most recently to Europe, where he urged that security and cooperation concerns be taken up even beyond particular regions so that small and medium-sized countries, especially in the European and Mediterranean theatres, can assume their rightful economic and political place on the world map of the 21st century.

Since the next century and millennium will witness unprecedented interconnectedness and interdependence among nations in a highly competitive environment, the Middle East should prepare itself to face the future from now, having put itself on the road to peace and peaceful transformation already. Efforts by visionaries and leaders in this region can go a long way towards achieving that goal, especially if they are helped by our friends in Europe, America and throughout the world.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I columnist Mahmoud Rimawi Tuesday commented on Israeli President Ezer Weizman's visit to Jordan Wednesday by saying it will be another chance for him to learn more about Jordan's position with regard to the peace process. The visit takes place amid confusion and deadlock in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over Hebron, at a time which witnesses escalation of Jewish settlement programmes in Arab lands and the continued closure of the self-rule areas of Palestine, said the writer. The Israeli president, who has been trying to patch up differences between Israel, on the one hand, and Egypt, Palestine and Jordan, on the other, through his meetings with their leaders, realises that unless Israel's government complies with the requirements of peace, Israeli-Arab relations will deteriorate, said the writer. He said that Mr. Weizman realises that Jordan is not happy with Israel's measures in Jerusalem and the holy sites, its failure to give Jordan its share of water, as agreed on in the peace treaty, and its failure to allow a settlement to the refugees and the displaced Palestinians since the 1967 war. The writer said that in addition to the Jordanian concerns, the deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian lands is causing further tension in the bilateral relations.

The Washington Watch

U.S. elections — 'while not illegal, not in keeping with the spirit and intent of the law'

By Dr. James Zogby

THE COSTLIEST, meanest and, in some ways, most important election in recent U.S. history is over.

Over \$1.6 billion was spent by the parties on behalf of the campaigns for president, 34 Senate seats and 435 congressional seats nationwide.

The overwhelming majority of the money spent was what is called "soft money" and "independent expenditures" — money that was raised and spent outside the strict limits placed on campaign finance by federal election laws.

While federal law limits contributions to candidates to \$1,000.00 per individual, and \$5,000.00 per political action committee, no limits are placed on the money that is spent by the political parties or interest groups seeking to influence an election. As a result of these "loopholes", huge amounts of money are now entering the political process.

Interest groups, like organised labour unions, the National Rifle Association, Trial Lawyers, and major businesses, have independently spent hundreds of millions of dollars in advertising campaigns designed to swing voters for or against candidates who took positions favourable or unfavourable to issues that affect their interests.

Hundreds of millions were also contributed by those groups or by individuals affiliated with those groups to the political parties or directly to the candidate's campaign funds.

Over twenty companies and unions spent more than \$1 million each this election year, several spent over \$2 million each.

While considerable attention has been focused recently on some questionable contributions made to the Democratic Party by some companies and individuals linked to Asian countries, both parties have taken advantage of these "loopholes" and have engaged in practices that, while not illegal, are not in keeping with the spirit and intent of the election law.

The public has been outraged and there are calls for new reforms in campaign finance laws. This is not the first time that the public has been concerned about the role of big money in politics — and it will not be the last. There are several reasons why it will remain difficult to pass new campaign finance reforms.

The most significant obstacle is the fact that those who will be called on to make the reforms are those who benefit from the current system. Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress and in the political parties are hesitant to make serious reforms since they fear losing the advantages provided by the current system.

No real alternative has been found to the current system and therefore, political leaders faced with the skyrocketing cost of campaigns (paying for media time, hiring consultants and organising campaigns) fear losing a major source of funds that are necessary to run modern political campaigns.

If big money effected this year's campaign so did the meanness of the campaign itself. For two years now, Republicans have engaged in an assault against the president, first lady and White House personnel,

charging them with a variety of offences. Two years of hearings and investigation have not yet produced charges — but those accusations found their way into the campaign. Senator Dole and other Republican spokespeople have termed the White House "the most corrupt," and the president has been accused of "lying" and "demeaning the office of the president."

These charges have influenced voters and they have marred the political process. They have increased public disillusionment and distrust — already a serious problem in U.S. politics.

This phenomenon of angry voters and voter alienation has, for years, been a disturbing trend in U.S. politics. It not only did end with the election of 1996, it may have grown.

Amidst the mean-spirited attacks and the flooding of the system with big money there were critical decisions that faced U.S. voters in 1996. The definition and role of government and the role of the U.S. in the post-cold war era were the subjects of intense debate in presidential and congressional races.

Clearly framed at the two conventions, voters were presented with two strikingly opposing visions by the Democrats and the Republicans.

Republicans, adhering to the maxim that "the best government is less government," made a determined effort to convince voters that by cutting taxes and slashing government social programmes and regulation they could restore personal freedom and create an idyllic America where individual initiative and private entrepreneurs would reign

and solve most of our nagging social problems. Republicans hoped that with a conservative Republican Congress and president they could usher in such a revolution, completing the work begun by President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

Democrats countered, reminding voters that the Republican revolution produced the huge deficits that currently plague the nation's economy and that the reforms that the Republicans seek to enact are primarily those which provide for the privileged class not for the most vulnerable members of society: the elderly, the young, the poor, the jobless and the ill. The regulations that Republicans want to remove, Democrats have noted, are those which protect against pollution, unsafe consumer products and unsafe work conditions.

Democrats have stressed that while government could be trimmed, it remains necessary to protect the common good, to build community and to provide opportunity for those who need assistance.

The Republican emphasis on individualism and chauvinism has also led to tendencies towards isolation or rejection of multinational cooperation. Democrats have countered with an explanation of the role of the United Nations and the need for positive U.S. engagement in world affairs. At times, this debate has also become mean-spirited, with both Pat Buchanan and Bob Dole personally attacking U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali — emphasising the "foreignness" of his name to make the point

that America should not be controlled by outside parties. While the president, during the campaign, bent to the Republican demand to reject a second term for Dr. Ghali, he also continued to assert the political role of the U.N. and international cooperation.

In the highly charged partisan climate of 1996, the pull of third party independent politics lost its attraction due to growing public distrust of megalomaniac billionaire Ross Perot. The reform mood will resurface in coming years, but it will require a new, credible leadership and a clearly defined alternative issue agenda to succeed.

The election may be over, but the issues and problems of 1996 will continue to shape the political debate. There will continue to be a push for campaign reform. The public has been shocked by the \$1.6 billion raised throughout the course of this election and the role that big contributors play in U.S. politics. The sharp political division on the future of the U.S. and its role in the world will continue to frame both the public debates and the struggle between Republicans and Democrats in Congress and the White House.

The meanness of 1996 will tragically also continue to play itself out in congressional battles and in the public's political discourse. To a great extent, however, this penchant for personal attacks and the drive to discredit individuals in government will cloud the more serious issues that must be discussed and continue to further erode public confidence in government and political leadership.

'Peace and security are not alternatives, they are two sides of the same coin'

By Malcolm Rifkind

I AM visiting the Middle East at a time of great tension, but also of historic opportunity. The peace process is at a crossroads. Israel and the Palestinians will determine its future, but Britain and other Western countries can help influence the outcome.

In my meetings with Benjamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat I have put forward six key points which would help restore momentum to the peace process.

First we need an urgent deal on Hebron. That was why I visited the city on Sunday, to symbolise British and international support for a final agreement on Israeli redeployment as an essential first step in reviving the peace process.

That must lead to implementation of the other obligations in the interim agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. We are seeking a clear commitment from Israel to redeploy elsewhere in the West Bank and to reopen the border between Israel and Gaza to facilitate economic activity.

In parallel, we need to see the reopening of the final status talks. These cannot avoid the hard issues, such as Palestinian self-determination, and the status of Jerusalem. Nor should either side seek to preempt the negotiations by excluding options central to the other side — such as the Palestinian desire for statehood. Peace and security are not alternatives. They are two sides of the same coin. Diminish one, and the whole currency is degraded.

In all this, the Palestinians will need to continue to show moderation, respect for democratic principles and dedication to the path of negotiation. There can be no place for extremists and men of violence.

The aim must continue to be a comprehensive peace with the Syrian and Lebanese negotiations restored. The international community



has a key role. I met the EU's new envoy to the Middle East peace process, and urged the parties to cooperate with him. The EU wants to complement the work of the U.S., not compete with it. The European economic role is already acknowledged. We can now build a valuable political place in the process.

The international community also has a central role in promoting stability in the Gulf. That means opposing acts of aggression by Saddam Hussein of Iraq. If we let him throw his weight around in one area, unchallenged, he will surely challenge elsewhere. That is why he must be contained. I recognise that the Iraqi people are suffering as a result. I deeply regret this. But relaxing the sanctions imposed on Iraq without Iraq's full compliance with the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions would not help Saddam Hussein would not devote his resources to feeding his people, but to rebuilding his military machine. The Iraqi people and Iraq's neighbours would again pay the price. That was why, last year, we devised

what became Security Council Resolution 986, the so-called "oil for food" scheme. Eighteen months after its adoption, Iraq is still obstructing its implementation.

I can only look forward to the day when Iraq is no longer ruled by a regime which ignores international obligations and brutalises its own people. Such an Iraq would need the support of the international community to rebuild. We would work to ensure it got that support. The measures now in force against Saddam Hussein would no longer be needed. Iraq's isolation could end. The country could realise its huge potential, its wealth of people, of hydrocarbons, of agriculture.

We must also keep a careful watch on Iran, which professes a wish to play a constructive role in the interests of regional stability. The facts tell a different story. Iran's programme to develop weapons of mass destruction, its opposition to the Middle East peace process, its support for terrorist groups all make it hard to contemplate a normal relationship. But we have not sought to isolate Iran.

With our European partners we are engaged in a critical dialogue, trying to bring about an improvement in Iran's policies. We have seen some small changes. But I have to say I am deeply disappointed by the lack of real results so far.

This, then, is a region whose varied problems challenge the international community. We need imagination to deal with them. What is also needed is an overall structure to encourage cooperation between all the countries of the region, the Arab states, Turkey and Israel, with the help of friends outside, like Britain, France, the United States and others. A structure comprehensive in its membership and wide-ranging in its functions. In Europe we have learned how regional cooperation can heal the distrust between former enemies, through bodies such as the European Union, NATO, the WEU and the Council of Europe, each with its separate purpose and membership. But we have also learned the value of having a comprehensive body where every nation can come together on a basis of equality to work on problems

which affect them. The Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, initially an ice-breaker, has evolved into the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a vehicle for cooperation over a very wide area indeed.

There would be clear benefits in establishing what we might call an Organisation for Cooperation in the Middle East (OCME). This would provide a framework for dialogue and active collaboration, for lowering barriers and improving links. Such an organisation would evolve, rather than spring fully-fledged into existence. It could play a role in conflict resolution and confidence-building, in fighting the causes of terrorism, as well as in building the sort of economic and political networks that prevent conflict and reduce the risks of terrorism. I would expect in due course countries like Iraq and Iran to find their place in the OCME once their international behaviour permits it.

An OCME would not be a substitute for the essential work of the Middle East peace process. There must be no diversion from that. The relationship between Israel and the Palestinians, like those between Israel and Syria and Lebanon will have to be worked out bilaterally and with clarity. But one natural function for an OCME would be to support and build on the peace process.

I have launched the idea of an Organisation for Cooperation in the Middle East, and we are discussing it with our friends in the region and internationally. It would help ensure peace, progress and stability in the Middle East; objectives that are crucial to British interests as well as to those of its inhabitants.

Malcolm Rifkind is Britain's Foreign Secretary. This article is reprinted from the Times of London.

IT OCCURRED TO ME

Customs of customs

By Ali Kassay

Last month I had the privilege of participating in a seminar on competitiveness in the Middle East, held at Boston, USA. My colleague, Dr. Yusuf Mansur, has already written with erudition about the theory, but I permit myself to add to his output because I was particularly fascinated by the comparisons drawn at the seminar between behaviour patterns in economies that are competitive, non-competitive, and those working to increase their competitiveness.

One of the areas reviewed, where government action could enhance or hinder competitiveness, was customs procedures. The speaker pointed out that in Peru, which had succeeded in upgrading this vital service, a ship's contents could be cleared through customs within 40 hours. This put it ahead of the U.S., where the same procedure would take up to four days, and, as an example of uncompetitiveness, another country was cited where this procedure would take a whole week. The speaker stressed every syllable of the last part, to drive her point home. I reflected to myself that a Jordanian businessman would drool at the prospect of clearing his goods through customs in one week. Even a delay of merely two or three weeks would send him humming a gay tune and giving generously to beggars on his way to work.

The point was brought into sharp focus after my return, when a friend lamented that he received a gift parcel from abroad. Armed with the airway bill, he went to claim the consignment, only to discover that it had been lost, and that he should still pay three hundred dinars in customs duties for it. Being of a foreign nationality, the man was flabbergasted. He inquired why he should pay duties on a parcel which he did not receive. "Aha!" Came the answer: "How do we know that you have not contrived to elude our vigilance and smuggle it through?"

Realising the futility of logic in a situation that was growing more Kafkaesque by the minute, his reason went numb. He became only curious to explore the process of thought that animated his interlocutor. He inquired how the Customs Department reached the figure three hundred dinars, as duties on a gift declared in the airway bill to be worth \$50.

Had the customs officer read his Doyle he probably would have been tempted to say: "You know my methods. Apply them." Instead, he explained, with a wry smile on his face, that in case of a lost consignment, it is the custom of the Customs Department to estimate a high value for the contents, so that the miscreant would knuckle down and produce the parcel which they assume he had smuggled through, in order to pay duties on the real value, which would be lower. However, since he was such a nice guy, the officer decided to do him a favour and charge him only three hundred dinars.

So surreal was this statement that my friend could only thank the customs officer and make his way to a watering hole where to reflect wistfully on departing aeroplanes.

My friend's friend, a 20-year-old receptionist, is not timid about making sure she does not lose any of her fellow workers' belongings. She is a very careful person, and she said, "I even remember to Japan's old emphasis on cleanliness is surprising. The kids it is generating since a deadly epidemic broke out across Japan in June, the use of sanitary saxes, and antiseptic gels, grips has skyrocketed."

This latest wave of "cleanliness" is really surreal, said Kyoko, a well-known journalist at Reitaku University. "For example, 'laundry money' is no

more fortified the lower part is surrounded by an apple made earth. The excavation revealed the Age town's location system, the wall divided rooms, a gate external to the pier on the found to be chambers of nearly 1. Some of its over two meters identified el-dan and P. they are no maximum s. Three of the excavated of them we the initial the late Iron

use them nothing will be their clientele. "It may be to public customers more clean Sanwa Hidehito Tokyo Bank is except even "total branch" Tokyo. Customer front of a machines made of plastics rated with that resist fungus. No other machine now teller with the plastic. Mitsubi

Features

Digging at Khirbat Al Mudayna reveals important aspects of ancient history

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

New field research in central Jordan is generating information on two Iron Age and Nabataean sites that promises to clarify important aspects of the cultural and political history of these two important periods in the ancient history of the land of Jordan. The fieldwork at Khirbat Al Mudayna, located 40 kilometres south of Amman on the Moabite plateau (southwest of Jiza and northeast of Dhiban), is headed by Dr. Michele Daviau, professor of Near Eastern Archaeology at Wilfrid Laurier University (Ontario, Canada).

Her team's first season of excavation this summer revealed substantial architectural and cultural remains, including a walled town from the Iron Age II period (around 800-600 BC) and buildings from the Nabataean and Herodian periods (1st centuries BC/AD), just before the area came under direct Roman imperial control.

The large tell of Khirbat Al Mudayna was visited, identified and examined by European and American scholars around the turn of the century, and was last studied for surface remains in the 1930s by the American archaeologist Nelson Glueck. Its summit is surrounded by a large case-

mate fortification wall, and the lower portion of the hill is surrounded by what looks like a moat, formed by an apparently man-made earthen embankment.

The excavation on the north side of the summit revealed part of the Iron Age town's casemate fortification system, comprising the five-metre-wide wall divided into internal rooms, a gateway and an external tower. The gateway, buttressed by a stone pier on the north side, was found to consist of six chambers measuring a total of nearly 14 metres long. Some of its walls still stand over two metres high. Similar gateways have been identified elsewhere in Jordan and Palestine, though they are not designed for maximum security.

Three of the six internal rooms in the gateway were excavated this year. Some of them were reused after the initial occupation (in the late Iron Age) for non-security, probably industrial purposes; this is evidenced by the remains of a lime kiln, a 1.6-metre-wide limestone basin with inscribed designs, collapsed and charred wood, and fragments from storage jars that once stood over a metre high. Other artifacts found here included gaming pieces, a basalt mortar bowl and an animal-shaped figurine fragment.

Outside the wall are the

remains of a tower measuring some four metres square, whose collapsed mud brick walls stood on stone foundations. The tower probably served to defend the gateway.

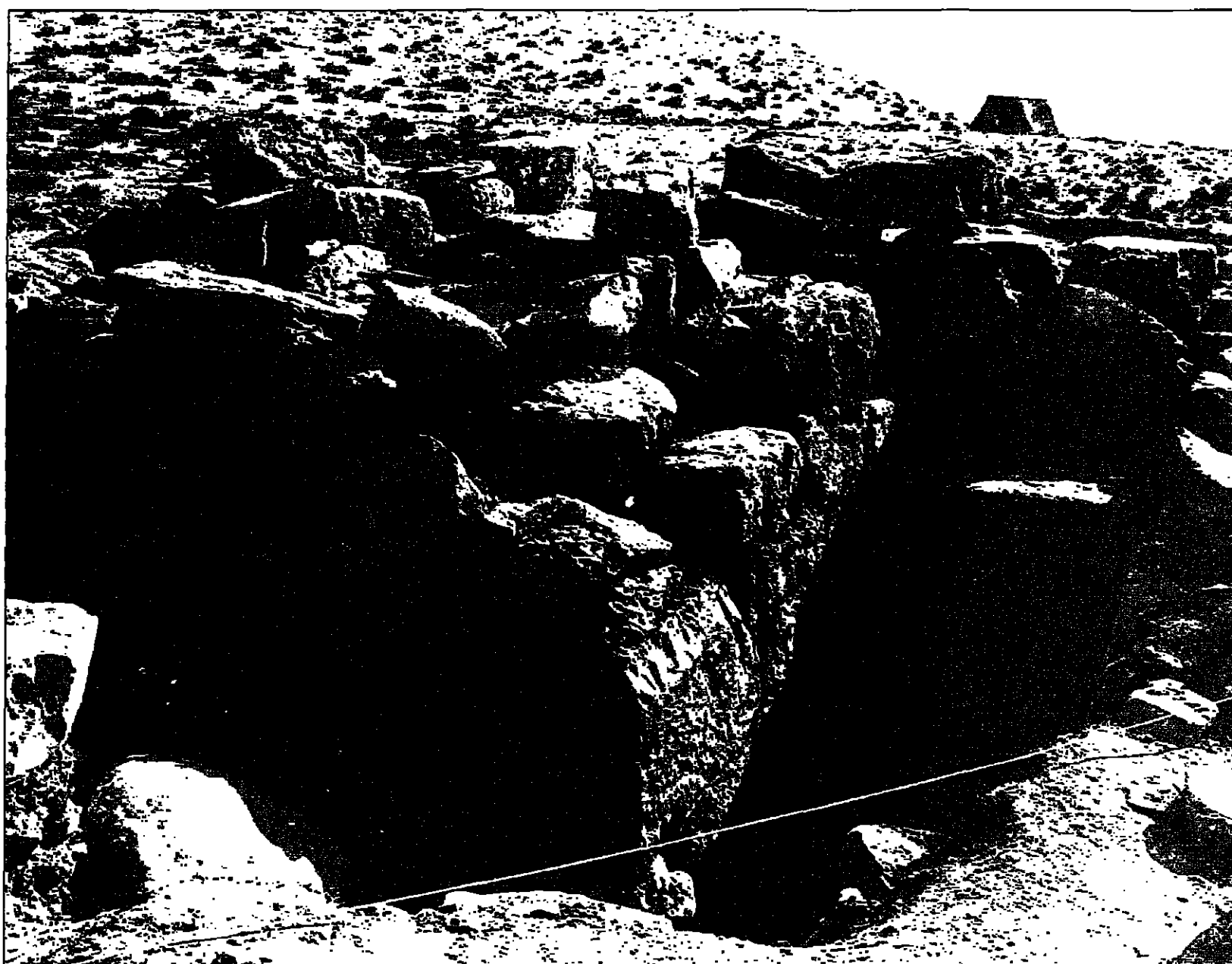
About 12 metres from the gate is a visible depression that may have formed part of a complex water system. This area included many stone tools that could have been used to process food, such as mortars, grinders, hammerstones, round pounders, and loaf-shaped millstones. Fragments of a tabun (cooking oven) and charcoal suggest that this area was used for food processing. Dr. Daviau told the Jordan Times in a recent interview in Amman.

"Our most impressive find was a huge basalt grinding platform that would have required two people to operate, the largest of its kind ever found in this part of Jordan," she said. Loom weights and spindle whorls were also recovered from this part of the site, indicating that textile manufacturing took place at one point.

All the shards from this area were Moabite in style and dated to the Iron II period, in line with similar pottery collected by other excavators from the important Iron Age sites of Dhiban and Balua. Fallen ashlar building blocks indicate the presence of an important and well-constructed building in the immediate vicinity, which will be explored in future seasons. One incised ceramic shard with Moabite script was found, probably a personal name inscribed on a vessel.

The importance of this Iron Age site excavation stems partly from what it may clarify about the political history and cultural traditions in this area during a turbulent historical moment characterised by reciprocal conquest and reconquest by Moabites, Ammonites and Israelites. This well fortified town was almost surely located in a strategic and contested frontier area, possibly the town of Jahaz or another of the many Moabite towns known from biblical references and the Meshe inscription. The Moabite King Meshe fortified this region to protect it against his enemies. The importance of security is also attested in the presence of many hilltop watchtowers near fortified towns.

During the Iron Age the



Part of the Nabataean building with a staircase, probably a temple, excavated at Khirbat Al Mudayna (photos by Robert E. Mittelstaedt)

area's population expanded and many new towns were founded. A parallel regional agricultural expansion generated wealth and may have attracted would-be predators. The major Assyrian presence to the north was also a factor in promoting the growth of towns and the local economy. Yet, we know very little about sites in this region during this period, for no other sites have been excavated in the wide stretch of land between Dhiban to the south and Jalul to the north. The Iron II walls were probably built on bedrock, suggesting that no earlier settlements existed here, but the life span of the town is not yet clear. It could have lasted for just a few generations, or centuries.

Nabataean settlement

The site seems to have been abandoned during the Persian and Hellenistic periods, and shows evidence of human use again

in the Nabataean period. The excavation on the lower side of the tell's north slope revealed a large building measuring 10 by 15 metres, perhaps a storehouse (for the perennial wadi near the site would have permitted substantial agricultural production). The ancient part of the building walls (the modern part represents a bedouin field wall) dates from the 1st Century AD, during the early Roman period which was also characterised by Herodian rule in Palestine and Nabataean culture in central and southern Jordan.

Pottery from this area included Iron Age shards that had rolled down the hill from the upper, older settlement, Roman shards, and terra sigillata ware from the pre-Roman Nabataean phase of the area's history. Other finds included a Moabite female figurine, a bulla, and two seal impressions.

North of this area was

uncovered another large building measuring some 8 x 9 metres, with an internal staircase of ten steps that turns at a 90-degree angle. On the strength of pottery, including a lamp found on the stairs, this building has been dated to the Herodian era (1st centuries BC-AD), before the direct Roman conquest of south and parts of central Jordan. A raised platform with a central cist at the top of the staircase was reused as a grave by local residents in more recent eras, and an infant burial was also found on the staircase.

The architectural features suggest that the building was a Nabataean temple. An additional room measuring 3 x 4 metres was added to the west side of the central building, and included a doorway, two possible arch supports, and a stone carved drain. The whole complex was surrounded by a perimeter wall that has yet to be excavated.

The site produced distinct Nabataean fineware pottery that was imported from Petra, as attested by the differences in the clay used for the local and imported wares. Local clay was used for coarsewares.

The regional context of the settlement in the Nabataean period is very different from the turbulence of the Iron Age-II. The Nabataean settlement enjoyed relative safety and security and benefited from its strategic location on an important crossing of the Wadi Thamad, on the road between the settlements at Umm Al Walid to the north and Umm Al Rasas to the south.

Regional survey

This year's initial season of an extensive regional survey, headed by Dr. J. Andrew Dearman from Austin Presbyterian Seminary (Texas, U.S.), covered an area of some 5 x 8 kilometres and identified 18

sites, of which 14 (mostly hilltop watchtowers) were previously unknown. The newly discovered sites include an Iron Age shrine site and three Nabataean farming communities with building remains, caves, cisterns, dams, and other water installations. Smaller finds included terra sigillata and painted pottery, zoomorphic vessel fragments, miniature shrine pieces, and Iron Age female figurines.

The Wadi Al Thamad Archaeological Project is affiliated with the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), and has been conducted in cooperation with the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, with the assistance of the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman. Funding for the project has been provided by Wilfrid Laurier University, participants, and private donations. The excavations will continue in 1997.



Moabite (Iron Age) female figurine fragment from Khirbat Al Mudayna

Even in Japan, today's cleanliness fads seem surprising

By Braven Smillie
The Associated Press

Tokyo — Hisako Furuta occasionally wears a gauze mask in public to avoid, as she puts it, "inconveniencing others."

The 20-year-old receptionist is not timid about her looks. Like many Japanese, she just wants to make sure she does not sneeze anywhere near her fellow workers and subway commuters. "It looks rude to carelessly spread germs around," she said.

But even people accustomed to Japan's age-old emphasis on cleanliness are surprised by the fads it is generating now.

Ever since a deadly food poisoning epidemic broke out across Japan in June, the demand for products such as sanitary saxophones and antiseptic bicycle grips has skyrocketed.

"This latest wave of products is really surprising," said Kyoko Yashiro, a well-known sociologist at Reitaku University. For example, "laundering money" is no

longer only a vice that banks dread — it's a come-on they use to win over customers.

Sanwa Bank's newest automatic teller machines not only count and press the bills they dispense, they also sanitise them to ensure that nothing more than funds will be transferred to their hyper-hygienic clientele.

"It may not be crucial to public health, but our customers are definitely more comfortable using clean ATMs," said Sanwa spokesman Hidehito Mori.

Tokyo Mitsubishi Bank is taking the concept even further at its "total anti-germ branch" in eastern Tokyo.

Customers line up in front of automated teller machines with surfaces made of state-of-the-art plastics indelibly saturated with chemicals that resist bacteria and fungus.

No other bank has gone that far, but most other major ones are now laminating their teller machine cards with the antibacterial plastic. Mitsubishi spokesman

Kazutaka Umegaki said such banking is especially "popular with young female customers, many of whom say they do not want to touch things handled by middle-aged men."

The obsession with cleanliness really took off during an epidemic of the O157 strain of the e. coli bacterium, which killed 11 people and sickened 10,000 in June and July.

Despite an exhaustive government study, no one knows what food the bacteria was in when it first struck an elementary school cafeteria in central Japan, then spread nationwide.

The government quickly toughened its sanitary standards and inspections of everything from sushi shops and public school cafeterias to swimming pools and lavatories.

During the epidemic, experts warned about dangerous bacteria in public bathrooms. That's when the travel washlet, a refillable portable bidet the size of a paperback novel, emerged.

The bathroom hardware maker Toto Ltd.

says it has sold 130,000 of the battery-powered bidets in the last year, four times what it had expected to. The items sell for \$180 apiece.

Other big sellers this summer were pencils, pens, stationery, bicycle grips, musical instruments, and karaoke microphones — all made of antiseptic plastic.

Japan has long valued cleanliness.

Most shrines of the country's indigenous religion, Shinto, require a ritual washing of the hands and mouth before anyone can enter them. And no one ever enters a home without first taking their shoes off to avoid dirtying the floors.

But the latest trends may be going a bit too far, says Ms. Yashiro, the sociologist.

"Young people today think they can banish germs from their lives with a few gimmicks," she said. "But after you use your antiseptic ATM, you still walk out the door into a world of germs."

Americans vote

(Continued from page 1)
Wamsky, 35, who works for the Teamsters Union, as she voted.

At the same location, 48-year-old Gloria Grimsley said: "It's not like I love the guy ... but when I weigh everything, I go for Dole."

Late polls said the Republicans seemed likely to retain control of the 100-member Senate. But the 435-seat House of Representatives was rated too close to call. Mr. Clinton's personal support hovered around the 50 per cent mark in surveys where many seemed to look upon him as the lesser of two evils.

Mr. Clinton, 50, was hoping to become the first Democrat reelected president since Franklin Roosevelt in 1944. Mr. Dole, an ex-Kansas senator and World War II soldier, was pursuing "one last mission." Ross Perot, the Texas billionaire who took nearly one vote in five in a 1992 presidential bid, was a far weaker force this time around.

Out of 185,000 polling stations nationwide, the residents of two tiny New Hampshire communities were the first to cast ballots in the 1996 election. Shortly after midnight, Dixville Notch and Han's Location cast 31 votes for Mr. Dole, 30 for Mr. Clinton and five for Mr. Perot.

Weizman visit will help bilateral relations and peace process

(Continued from page 1)

indicated that Israel believed that given the imminent signing of the accord, Jordanians would feel more comfortable receiving President Weizman, who will be paying his first visit to Jordan.

President Weizman will be accompanied by his wife and senior officials from his office as well as the director-general of the foreign ministry.

According to a Jordanian official, "President Weizman always had a standing invitation to visit Jordan after the signing of the peace treaty" between the two countries in October 1994.

The invitation was renewed last month during

a telephone conversation between King Hussein and President Weizman.

President Weizman, who will fly by helicopter to Amman, is expected to land at the Royal Palace around mid-morning on Wednesday. King Hussein and President Weizman will have a closed-door meeting to be followed by expanded discussions attended by senior Jordanian officials and members of the presidential entourage.

The president will address a press conference at around 12.30 noon and will visit the Arab Potash Company on the Dead Sea. The Arab Potash Company and Israel's Dead Sea Works have launched a \$90 million joint venture to produce bromine using Israeli

technology and Jordanian raw material, infrastructure and management.

President Weizman's visit to the potash plant, Mr. Shamir said, was an indication of Israel's strong desire to develop close economic ties with Jordan. He cited other joint projects in the pipeline, including "the lowest park on earth" near the Dead Sea and the "Peace" airport at Aqaba that will serve both Jordan and Israel.

The ambassador said Jordanian and Israeli officials had been meeting regularly to present joint projects at the MENA summit and businessmen from both sides were also close to concluding many private sector projects.

No deal will be signed if it covers only Hebron — PNA

(Continued from page 1)

ing in a bid to hammer out a Hebron deal before Mr. Ross' return.

Mr. Mordechai said that measures will be taken against extremist settlers trying to create provocations.

On Tuesday, police arrested Jewish settler Noam Federman, a former leader of the outlawed anti-Arab Kach movement, because he sent an inflammatory fax to Israel Radio.

Mr. Mordechai also visited the West Bank town of Nablus, another friction point between settlers and Palestinians. He stopped at Joseph's

tomb, the reputed burial site of the biblical patriarch. The seminary was the site of some of the fiercest fighting in September.

Sameh Kenaa, a Palestinian security official, protested the positioning of Israeli soldiers at Joseph's Tomb, saying it was supposed to be protected by civilian guards only. "This is only a place for prayer and not for military activities," he said.

Palestinian police and the Israeli army extended joint patrols to the West Bank town of Jericho on Tuesday for the first time since the two sides fought running gunbattles in late September. The Israeli army mean-

while lifted its ban on Israeli citizens visiting the autonomous Palestinian territories of Jericho and Jenin in the northern West Bank.

In another development, the Palestinian police reopened an ancient synagogue near Jericho closed since late September.

Most joint patrols in the Gaza Strip resumed last month and General Ziyad Al Atrash, head of the Palestinian delegation in the joint security committee with Israel, told AFP Sunday that patrols had also begun in the Jenin region and would be gradually extended to other areas of the West Bank.

Unexpected oil demand surge baffles analysts

LONDON (R) — Where is all the oil going? World oil output is at record levels and refineries are running flat out.

But five-year high oil prices and inventories at worryingly low levels heading into winter have prompted oil analysts to speculate that global demand for oil is rising faster this year than even the most bullish predictions.

"It is quite a puzzle. Production is running very high and there has been no real stock building so it is blindingly obvious that demand is higher than we expected," said Mike Barry of Energy Market Consultants.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the West's energy watchdog, global oil demand should average 71.8 million barrels per day (bpd) this year, a whop-

pling 1.7 million over 1995 levels.

And the world will be even thirstier for oil next year when demand is predicted to surge to 73.6 million bpd, the IEA says.

But analysts say the Paris-based IEA which draws its membership from members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) appears to have underestimated world oil use.

And they say that if the harsh winter of 1995-1996 is repeated demand could even be stronger.

"We think demand is at least 200,000 bpd higher than the IEA numbers for this year and about 300,000 above for 1997 assuming just normal winters," said Mehdi Varzi, an oil analyst at Kleinwort Benson.

Growth of oil use for transport continues to outpace economic growth and appears immune to down-

turns in the economy or higher oil prices, analysts say.

"America's renewed love affair with big engines and big cars has impacted fuel efficiency which has been declining since 1991 and in large part explains the renewed growth in demand," said veteran oil trader Andrew Hall, president of Phibro Inc. in a recent speech.

Spurred by an economic revival, OECD demand has been growing between 2.1 and 2.5 per cent so far this year, says consultants Petroleum Finance Co. (PFC).

The Washington-based PFC says U.S. demand for oil, especially for middle distillates like heating fuel and diesel, is averaging 4.7 per cent over 1995 levels.

While the U.S. is pacing OECD demand growth, demand in the larger non-OECD countries like India,

South Korea, China and Brazil is even more remarkable.

PFC says year-to-date demand growth for gasoline and diesel in India is 13.5 per cent over 1995 while Brazilian gasoline demand is up 18.3 per cent and Korean gasoline demand up 17.8 per cent.

"The engine of growth is really in Asia, Mexico and Brazil. These countries do not follow the pattern in the OECD and some have moved in a big way to petrochemicals and high tech industries using a lot of oil," one Europe-based demand forecaster said.

Buoyant demand coupled by tensions in the Middle East and a reluctance to sell oil while stock levels are so low has pushed prices to post-Gulf war highs recently.

Pakistani businessmen generally pleased with Bhutto's dismissal

KARACHI (AFP) — Pakistan's business community Tuesday hailed the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's government, saying her policies were responsible for a wrecked national economy.

"The economy of the country is in shambles and the Bhutto government is responsible. It is a very good decision and should have come a month earlier," said Ilyas Bilour, the president of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries.

"As they say, it is never too late."

"We do not want such people to return to power. The community has greeted this change with a sigh of relief. They (Bhutto's government) were totally against the business community," Mr. Bilour added.

He said the change would create confidence among the business community, but "it would take time for

rehabilitation."

The main point of contention between Mr. Bhutto and the business community had been the imposition of heavy taxes in the budget last June and the constant devaluation of the Pakistani rupee against the U.S. dollar.

Financial analysts received the news with caution, saying the composition of the caretaker government ahead of fresh election next February would have a major impact on international investors' confidence.

"There will be an immediate rise in the stock market index, but that will be a short-term correction," said an analyst who requested anonymity. "General uncertainty will keep the market see-sawing for a while."

"The ousting of the government has been interpreted by the market as a very good change," said Yasin Lakhani, a leading stock

broker at the Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE).

"People are satisfied as they think the worst in the history of Pakistan is over. Even those who are not businessmen are cursing the ousted government."

Mr. Lakhani said.

"Whoever comes into power will face difficulties on the economic front," said the head of the Tata group of companies.

Businessmen maintained Ms. Bhutto's fiscal policies had increased duties on imports and repeatedly devalued the rupee and had made many Pakistani exports uncompetitive.

"The change has given us a new lease of life. It has given us a chance to stabilise our business, otherwise the Bhutto government would have destroyed us," said garments exporter Aziz Rajput.

Analysts warned against over-optimism, pointing out that there would be limited instant improvement.

"On the economic front, there will be little short-term gain," the analyst said. "Any incoming government will inherit the economic problems."

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West Bank industries to boycott Cairo economic summit

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AFP) — Palestinian industrialists said Tuesday they would boycott the Middle East economic summit in Cairo to protest Israeli security measures which have damaged the Palestinian economy.

"The industrial unions working in the West Bank have announced their decision" to boycott the summit, Mazen Sunuqrat, head of the Union of Food Industries, told the Palestinian daily Al Ayyam.

"Because of Israeli policies which have led to the deterioration of the economic situation, we find no justification for participating in the summit," he said.

The presidents of the eight unions representing industry owners in the West Bank decided at a meeting Saturday in Ramallah not to attend the third annual economic summit, to be held in

Cairo on Nov. 12-14. "This is our way to express our and our people's suffering under the current economic deterioration and under Israeli measures of force such as the closure of the territories," they said in a statement.

Mr. Sunuqrat said Palestinian businessmen "did not benefit" from the previous two economic summits held in Casablanca, Morocco, and Amman.

"From the Amman summit there were investments by 50 international companies in Israel. The investors explained that they could not invest in Palestinian areas due to heavy Israeli measures there," he said.

In the Gaza Strip, the president of the Association of Local Businessmen, Mahmoud Al Farr, told AFP his group "had wanted to boycott the summit because we see nothing

beneficial coming out of it."

"But (Palestinian President Yasser) Arafat asked that we go in order to keep up good relations with Egypt, so we agreed," Mr. Farr said.

Israel imposed a closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip last February after a wave of anti-Israeli bombings. It relaxed the closure to allow 50,000 Palestinians into jobs in Israel, but reimposed a complete seal 10 days ago.

The Palestinian gross domestic product has dropped by 23 per cent over the past four years, while per capita income fell 39 per cent over the same period, according to a U.N. report released Saturday.

The report stressed the negative impact of Israel's frequent closures of the Palestinian territories.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.5178	0.6078	1.2768	114.00	1.3335	1521.90	1.7014	5.1290
DE Mark	0.6588	1.0000	0.4900	0.8411	76.10	0.8760	1002.24	1.1213	3.3785
GB Sterling	1.6453	2.1000	1.0000	1.8756	163.26	2.1940	2593.53	2.7988	8.4372
CH Franc	0.7832	1.1878	0.4755	1.0000	89.26	1.0436	1191.22	133.25	4.0139
JP Yen	0.0088	1.3302	0.5325	1.1188	1.0000	1.1687	13.34	148.17	4.4952
CA Dollar	0.7499	1.1378	0.4854	0.9571	1.1687	1.0000	1140.85	1.2754	3.8448
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9984	0.3988	0.8838	1336.90	0.8753	11.17	3.3668	1.0000
NL Guilder	0.5878	0.9910	0.3867	0.8838	1336.90	0.8753	11.17	3.3668	1.0000
FR Franc	0.1950	0.2959	0.1184	0.24889	22.21	0.2599	33.17	33.1700	1.0000

Energy									
Oil	Last	Prices							
Brent	22.35	22.55							
W. Texa	22.80	22.75							
Bony	22.35	22.55							
Dubai	20.44	20.54							
UL Gas	223.00	221.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY				
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4049	0.1621	0.34067	30.4238				
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.41365	0.1656	0.34802	31.081				
KW Dinar	3.3458	5.0813	2.03376	4.2735	381.679				
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.02739	1.61264	3.38868	302.663				
CY Pound	2.1599	3.2783	1.3122	2.7578	246.069				

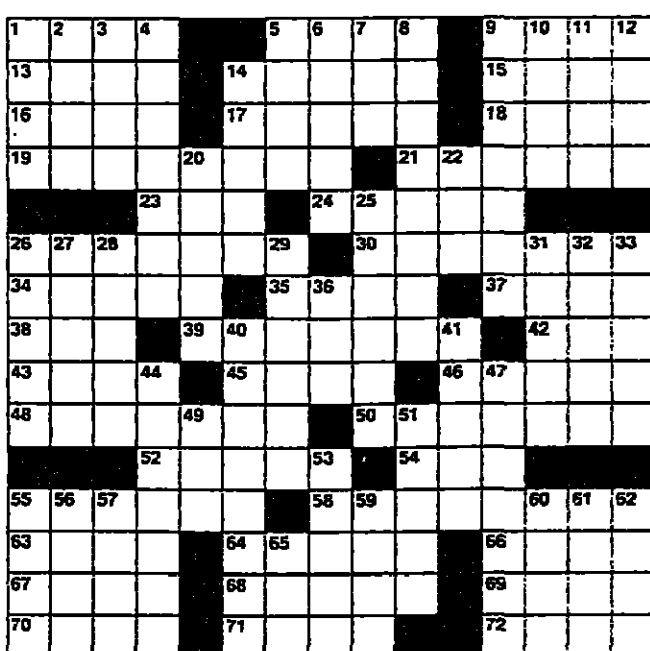
Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	379.3	379.8							
Silver (oz's)	4.82	4.84							
Platinum (oz's)	381.5	382.5							
CU (3 Months)	1430	1431							
AL (3 Months)	1999	0							
Zinc (3 Months)	1061	1063							
Lead (3 Months)	741	742							
NI (3 Months)	7150	7155							

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery							
Coffee (c/lbs)	121.42	Spot							
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1342	Spot							
Sugar (\$/ton)	157	Spot							
Wheat (\$/ton)	140	Spot							
Soya (c/lbs)	21.53	Spot							
Tee (\$/kg)	117	Spot							
Barley (\$/bsh)	2.07	Spot							
Rice (\$/ton)	470	Spot							

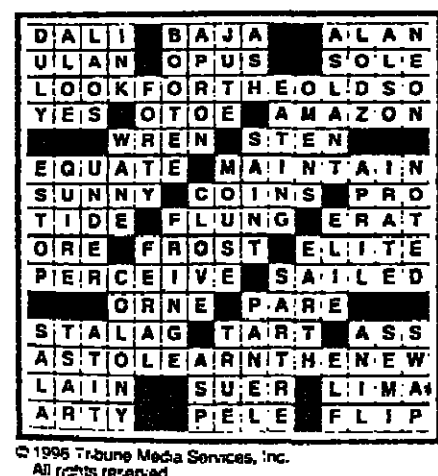
JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1653	1.1711							
DE Mark	0.468	0.4703							
CH Franc	0.5587	0.5615							
FR Franc	0.1384	0.1391							
JP Yen	0.6221	0.6252							
NL Guilder	0.4173	0.4194							
IT Lira	0.4656	0.4679							

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Mimicked
 - Party nothings
 - Companionless
 - Odense native
 - Ancient city of Edom
 - Gloat
 - Historic land of Israel
 - English region
 - RLS villain
 - Bookplate
 - Biologist Carrel
 - Actress Caldwell
 - Fisher cousin
 - Melodic flourish
 - Swankier
 - Big name in pickles
 - Objective
 - Pot
 - Parseghian
 - Hebrew prophet
 - Golfers Davis
 - Love
 - Vitality
 - Pre-med course
 - for the Misbegotten
 - Dutch province
 - Looks askance
 - Down Under GI
 - FBI man: abbr.
 - Wolflound
 - Conventional
 - Kirghiz range
 - Kentucky college
 - Restaurateur
 - Toots
 - up (judge)
 - Kind of tide
 - Hebodes
 - island
 - Gardener, at times
 - Disturb
 - Vagillate

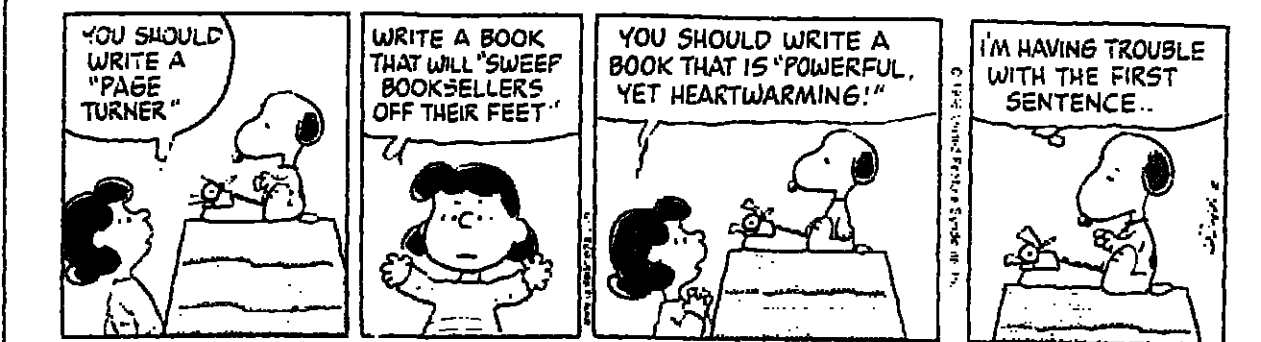


by William Canine



- DOWN
- Dressing tool
 - Rue de la —
 - Organic compound
 - Resident
 - Amaz
 - nice to have...
 - Before: pref.
 - Growing among rocks
 - Symphonic movement
 - African antelope
 - CA city
 - Is beholden
 - de Cuelar of the UN
 - Buddhist monk
 - Permit
 - Hallmarks
 - Actor Palminteri
 - Home on high
 - Actress Ladd
 - Program
 - Troy to the Greeks
 - "Middlemarch" author
 - Pours down
 - Volga tributary
 - Tanzanian port
 - Gulfaw
 - Window man
 - Cell division process
 - Year Sp.
 - Site of Doha
 - Welsh dog
 - Wild party
 - Melange
 - Demolish
 - Stagger
 - Red Sea vessel
 - Mrs. Chaplin
 - Type of picture
 - Kind of trip

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is not a good day to run out to new places since you would meet with nothing but disappointments. Postpone this until a better celestial period and at that time you can be with good friends.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your intuition may not work right today, and you have to be careful with your judgement as well, so take it easy. Later this evening you should consult a knowledgeable person concerning some project and get advice.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The outside world is not your oyster today, so don't see anyone who has a chip on his or her shoulder. Changes come quickly for you later tonight which will make your efforts on career activities more successful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You may have to change the activities you had planned for today, however, this will be for the better. Later this evening you can spend some time with good friends and have a wonderful time being in their company.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't get into any kind of entertainment today which is too expensive and/or risky, and be wise. Your mate needs your assistance at this time for some important tasks which he or she has been wishing to complete for some time.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be sure that you are controlled at home since situations today could test your patience. This is a good day and night for meditation, so spend some time with your loved ones in some special fun activities which will lighten your spirits.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a day when you need to be very careful in motion of all kind. Do not use sarcasm in speaking with others or you could offend someone who can be quite beneficial to your career activities.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You may feel you do not have enough of the fine things of life today, so do something constructive about it and make the most of any opportunities presented. Later this evening you can go out on the town with your loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't fuss over conditions which you can do little about today and then you can become more productive in your career activities. This evening should be spent on those new projects which need your immediate attention.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Plan how to gain more prosperity in the days ahead and get rid of restrictions in the path of your progress. Later this evening can be spent with close friends in those activities which are fun for those involved.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't expect much from your friends today since they are too busy, so paddle your own canoe. Avoid hasty changes this evening on any current projects which you are involved in at this time or there could be difficulties.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Avoid civic or worldly since bigwigs would not be very helpful to you today. Postpone until a better day any career activities which you are currently involved in and then you will gain the success you have been seeking for some time.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's

Baghdad pledges to grant Aqaba port 'absolute priority' with implementation of oil-for-food deal

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In view of the possible implementation of the U.N. oil-for-food deal, Baghdad has granted "absolute priority" to the port of Aqaba for traffic of Iraq-bound merchandise, Ports Corporation Director General Mohammad Dalabih said upon his return from a two-day visit to Iraq.

"The Iraqi authorities pledged to give absolute priority to the port of Aqaba and, when the oil-for-food agreement will be implemented, the traffic of the 2.3 million tonnes of food and medicine that Iraq will be allowed to import will enter the country via Aqaba and (the Iraqi port of) Basra," said Mr. Dalabih, who headed the Jordanian transport delegation to Baghdad.

Together with members of the Aqaba-based Ports Corporation, the delegation, which left Baghdad on Nov. 1, included Ministry of Transport officials and representatives from public and private shipping and maritime transport companies. Mr.

Dalabih said.

During what Mr. Dalabih described as a "very successful" visit, delegation members held talks with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Hamda Zubeidi, Minister of Trade Mohammad Mahdi Saleh, Minister of Transport Ahmad Murad and other Iraqi officials.

The U.N. oil-for-food plan, agreed on May 20, was to allow Iraq to sell oil worth \$2 billion over a six-month period on a renewable basis to buy food and medicine for its people, heavily suffering from a six-year-long U.N.-imposed trade

embargo.

But, following Iraqi forces' attacks against the Kurdish-held north of the country early in September, the U.N. suspended the deal.

Two weeks ago, however, international news agencies quoted Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller as saying that U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali had told her that "Iraq's oil pipeline would be reopened in a few weeks."

The Aqaba port was expected to handle a major increase in the volume of Iraqi-bound goods once the U.N. plan

became effective, and the Jordanian delegation's recent visit confirmed such expectations.

"The 2.3 million of tonnes of food and medicine (that Iraq is expected to import under the U.N. plan) will reach Baghdad via both Aqaba and Basra," Mr. Dalabih said.

Complaining of a drop in traffic and business following the imposition of the embargo against Iraq, Mr. Dalabih noted that "the Port of Aqaba has been working below capacity since 1990," and added that the port, "which used to handle 20 million tonnes of goods

every year before 1990, is handling now only 13 million tonnes of merchandise."

According to media reports, tonnage through Aqaba reached an "historic minimum" of around 10 million tonnes in 1994, dropping from the peak of 20 million tonnes in 1988, when at least a third of Aqaba's cargo was Baghdad-bound.

Commenting on these figures, Mr. Dalabih said business at the Aqaba port "suffered a 60 per cent loss," since Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Analysis shows standings of banks in Jordan

Following is the first of a two-part article comparing the assets, deposits and other financial data posted by the banks at the end of last year

By Samir Ghawi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An analysis of the balance sheets and profit and loss statements published by 19 commercial and investment banks operating in Jordan, shows the Arab Bank and the British Bank to be leading the banking sector in terms of size and profitability.

According to Mufleh Aql, the senior and well-known banker whose analysis of the 1995 performance of banks is the 13th consecutive comparison that he annually conducts, another four banks reached the top rank in terms of other criteria such as efficiency and productivity.

Mufleh Aql

In terms of the size of assets, the Arab Bank ranked in first place with a total JD 2,539.1 million that represent 33.7 per cent of the overall assets of banks in Jordan. In second place came the Housing Bank (JD 1,103.4 million or 14.7 per cent) followed by the Jordan Islamic Bank with JD 621.9 million in total assets that represent 8.3 per cent of the overall assets of banks in the Kingdom. The ranking of the three banks in 1995 were unchanged from the 1994 list.

The Bank of Jordan with JD 457 million in total assets replaced the Cairo Amman Bank (JD 417.1 million) as fourth largest. Retaining its 1994 sixth rank was the Jordan National Bank which had total assets of JD 304.8 million.

Comparing the banks according to the volume of deposits, the top six were the same banks mentioned earlier and also in the same order as follows: The Arab Bank (JD 2,251.1 million), the Housing Bank (JD 885 million), the Jordan Islamic Bank (JD 528.3 million), the Bank of Jordan (JD 384.5 million), the Cairo Amman Bank (JD 245.2 million) and the Jordan National Bank (JD 241.4 million).

In terms of percentage growth in assets the Middle East Investment Bank achieved the highest rate of 34.6 per cent noting that it was at the bottom of the list with a size of JD 59.9 million in total assets.

The highest growth in deposits was 30.6 per cent recorded by the Jordan Gulf Bank which at JD 134 million ranked the 15th on the list detailing the volume of deposits.

The table showing the order of banks in terms of the size of shareholders equity, the Jordan Gulf Bank was the last with a JD 31.6 million negative equity. The lowest positive equity was that of the Philadelphia Investment Bank which ranked 18th with JD 7.5 million.

The top six banks in terms of shareholders equity were: The Arab Bank (JD 86.2 million), the Housing Bank (JD 77.8 million), the Jordan Islamic Bank (JD 42 million), the Jordan National Bank (JD 38.2 million), the Bank of Jordan (JD 24.2 million) and the Arab Jordan Investment Bank (JD 23.6 million).

When measuring the shareholders equity against the deposits, the Middle East Investment Bank and the Philadelphia Investment Bank came in first and second place with a rate of 21.2 per cent and 16 per cent respectively. The lowest percentages of 3.8 per cent and (-23.6 per cent) were those of the Arab Bank and the Jordan Gulf Bank respectively.

Citibank headed the table of banks when credit facilities were taken as a percentage of total deposits. Leading with a 29.7 per cent, Citibank was followed by the Arab Jordan Investment Bank the Union Bank for Saving and Investment and the Arab Bank as their rates in this category were 31.2 per cent, 35.3 per cent and 36.1 per cent respectively. At the bottom of the list, the Jordan Islamic Bank had a rate of 81.9 per cent.

Daily Beat

Consumer society wants 'popular' food prices reduced

** THE JORDAN Consumer Protection Society is demanding that the prices of "popular" food (hommos, foul, falafel etc.) be lowered after the significant drop in the international prices of chick-peas during the past few days. Chick-peas are a prime ingredient of many Arabic dishes. But the Association of Restaurant Owners is actively trying to convince the Ministry of Supply of the need to raise the prices of these food items in order to balance a 10 per cent sales tax that the Department of Customs is insisting on imposing on "public restaurants."

The drop in the international prices of chick-peas has caused local prices to decline from JD0.900-JD1.000 a kilogramme to between JD0.600-JD0.700 nowadays. The price of chick-peas has peaked at JD800 per tonne on the international markets but has fallen lately to JD560 per tonne up to delivery at Aqaba.

Society President Mohammad Obeidat said: "It is only fair now that as prices of popular food were raised in the past due to higher cost, the prices should be lowered due to the substantial drop in the international prices of chick-peas."

"If the public restaurants do not voluntarily reduce their prices, then the Ministry of Supply must intervene another time to protect the consumer as it intervened before when the prices were hiked," Dr. Obeidat added.

The association has rejected any reduction in prices and claimed that the drop in the international prices of chick-peas does not represent more than three per cent of the raw material input in this type of food. "Moreover," said Yassin Akkash, the association president, "the cost of tahineh has recently shot up and has negatively affected the operations of these restaurants."

The Department of Customs, for its part, has lately sent a large number of warnings, coupled with fines for big amounts, to some public restaurants which did not comply with paying the sales tax.

There are more than 4,000 public restaurants in the country selling the traditional Arabic dishes which cost 250 fils for a plate of hommos and a loaf of bread. Before the price of bread was hiked, the price of the dish was 250 fils (AJ Dinstour).

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"It's a manly yogurt with big, hearty chunks of beef!"

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

POCAN

MUHID

FALOFY

BLAVER

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: SWOOP LIMBO BUSHEL TORRID

Answer: What the judge wanted to hear in the record case - BOTH SIDES

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHREISANI
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 05/11/1996

PAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUED	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW			SHARES	SHARES	JD	PRICE	PRICE		
252.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	13.5	1.42	6	200	49200	246.50	246.00	-.50
1.250	.880	MID. EAST INV. BK.	69.0	0.00	13	9200	9646	1.05	1.05	-
2.700	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.2	6.13	10	16750	37579	2.22	2.27	+.05
5.250	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	13.1	2.82	11	33000	16137	4.83	4.90	+.07
1.200	.890	JOR. GULF BANK	5.4	7.78	9	18650	18765	2.02	2.03	+.01
4.180	3.300	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.9	0.00	3	11500	4273	3.72	3.72	-
3.380	1.800	BETT. AL-NAL (BETRA)	1.1	8.33	1	400	720	1.84	1.80	-.04
5.850	4.450	ARAB BANKING CO.	23.3	0.00	9	4251	19119	4.50	4.50	-
1.630	1.000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	14	8174	10556	1.20	1.29	+.09
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 188.89	CHNG: 0.00	84	62075	164014				
2.870	2.500	UNITED INSURANCE	11.7	4.21	1	250	713	2.78	2.85	+.07
4.550	4.000	JERUSALEM INSUR.	12.2	4.44	3	124	558	4.55	4.50	-.05
2.910	1.880	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.2	10.87	4	312	574	1.88	1.84	-.04
3.050	2.010	YARCOOK INSUR.	8	0.00	1	200	386	2.03	1.93	-.10
2.400	1.850	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	8.3	7.27	3	650	1430	2.20	2.20	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 118.19	CHNG: -0.57	12	1536	3661				
1.900	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.0	7.59	7	5700	9006	1.58	1.58	-
2.800	2.090	SHIPPING LINES	10.6	7.94	2	15000	37800	2.54	2.52	-.02
1.990	1.080	JOR. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	6	2000	2320	1.16	1.16	-
1.260	.590	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	31.3	0.00	1	50	31	.62	.61	-.01
3.650	3.120	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	13.5	5.85	3	3781	12931	3.42	3.42	-
1.290	.960	JARNA EDUCATION	9	0.00	2	1700	1831	1.08	1.07	-.01
2.430	1.700	UNIFIED CO.	9.1	5.78	1	100	173	1.72	1.73	+.01
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 110.37	CHNG: -0.08	22	28331	64092				
3.770	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.9	3.03	27	14636	48332	3.31	3.30	-.01
3.550	2.710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	32.8	0.00	10	1912	5827	3.05	3.05	-
5.960	4.780	ARAB POTASH CO.	27.0	3.57	2	290	3780	5.60	5.60	-
10.550	8.720	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	9.3	8.73	12	505	4629	9.17	9.16	-.01
8.150	6.420	JOR. MORTEN KILLS	8.9	3.61	1	10000	6930	6.93	6.93	-
4.870	3.100	ARAB FRANK. MORT.	17.7	6.21	21	4845	15566	3.23	3.22	-.01
6.450	5.650	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.5	4.13	2	4000	24200	6.06	6.05	-.01
2.600	2.050	JORDAN DAIRY	13.2	6.98	2	281	604	2.15	2.15	-
2.290	1.400	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	2	4250	6033	1.48	1.42	-.06
960	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.00	0.00	50	43950	25840	.57	.58	+.01
1.500	1.060	JARNA PAPER CONV. IND.	7.9	8.93	3	500	580	1.15	1.16	+.01
1.090	.570	NATIONAL INDUS.	8.7	10.17	5	2450	1428	.57	.59	+.02
1.840	.970	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	9	2750	2955	.98	.94	-.04
3.250	2.280	UNIV. CEM. IND.	69.5	0.00	1	200	526	2.63	2.63	-
1.350	.800	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	1	200	154	.80	.77	-.03
1.950	1.080	ARAB FERTIL. CHEM.	21.9	0.00	6	1950	2292	1.18	1.17	-.01
3.280	1.480	UNIV. SECH. INDUS.	4.5	13.61	2	1750	2573	1.48	1.47	-.01
2.100	1.140	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	17.1	0.00	1	350	476	1.35	1.36	+.01
1.580	.890	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	24.2	0.00	3	2700	2403	.90	.89	-.01
2.460	1.750	EL - SAY RAYD WEAIR	7	0.00	12	7470	13669	1.83	1.83	-
1.460	1.080	TRTL. TORBICO	25.6	0.00	14	14184	15462	1.08	1.09	+.01
2.400	.990	UNION CH. & VEG.	24.4	0.00	12	12800	12872	1.00	.99	-.01
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 110.27	CHNG: -0.09	198	122973	194210				
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 147.67	CHNG: -0.05	316	214915	425976				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 05/11/1996										
.790	.440	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	18.5	0.00	7	8100	2272	.44	.46	+.02
.800	.560	JOR. TRADE PAC.	14.9	0.00	1	250	140	.56	.56	-
.950	.440	WAT. SUPPLY	9	0.00	5	1250	89	.47	.47	-
.930	.700	UNION INV. SOI	67.9	0.00	3	1498	318	.72	.71	-.01
1.110	.650	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	27	27200	12806	.45	.46	+.01
.950	.770	AL-DANATIR 750	9	0.00	4	4750	2280	.77	.73	-.04
.870	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	8	0.00	2	400	248	.62	.62	-
1.760	1.350	WAT. CHLORINE	8	0.00	7	2650	3567	1.35	1.34	-.01
.700	.450	ARAB INTL. INV. ZND.	9	0.00	8	5750	2788	.47	.49	+.02
1.100	.700	WAT. METER ENG. MEXICO	5	0.00	5	3500	1750	.50	.50	-
1.080	.750	JORDAN STEEL	8	0.00	1	500	380	.76	.76	-
.780	.430	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	7	8800	4216	.46	.46	+.02
.840	.600	RABE FARM. 652	8	0.00	2	1300	325	.60	.60	-
.830	.420	INDUS. ZND.	25.9	0.00	2	4500	1690	.42	.42	-
.950	.810	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	57.6	0.00	1	100	82	.82	.82	-
1.500	.530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	8.1	0.00	29	23000	15870	.69	.69	-
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 111	CHNG: 0.00	111	90448	49219				

† New 12 months Low

‡ Listed during the past 12 months

§ P/E ratio is 100 or more

|| Negative P/E

|| Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year

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Monica Seles

Seles drops to No. 2

MIAMI (AFP) — Monica Seles, the Yugoslav born American tennis player, slipped from her joint number one WTA ranking Monday to joint number two with Arantxa Sanchez Vicario — leaving Steffi Graf as sole possessor of the women's number one slot.

The WTA had decided to allow Seles to share the number one spot with Graf when she made her return to the tour last year after she recovered from the stab wound inflicted by a crazed Graf fan at a tournament in Hamburg in 1993.

However, despite Seles winning four tournaments since her return, and narrowly losing to Graf in the 1995 U.S. Open final,

her loss to Jennifer Capriati in the semifinals of the Chicago tournament last week has seen her slip from the No. 1 spot.

Seles, who is suing the German Tennis Federation for 24.4 million marks (\$16 million) in compensation for negligence because of the stabbing, has been suffering from a small tear in her left shoulder all year.

She is optimistic that a new therapy programme will enable her to avoid shoulder surgery and another lengthy lay-off which would force her to miss the Australian Open in January.

Seles is anxious to avoid surgery which could sideline her for another 12 weeks.

JOC seeks to upgrade Jordanian sports King sponsors 2 athletes in Sydney Olympics

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Setting their sights on the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) will soon be taking a series of measures in an effort to upgrade the standard of Jordanian sports and reach an acceptable competitive level.

According to an informed source at the JOC, a high level delegation will soon be leaving to Geneva to meet International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials, including IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, to discuss a plan of action to upgrade Jordanian sports.

The JOC official said that the committee's ambitious plan was further enhanced when it was announced

Tuesday that His Majesty King Hussein would be sponsoring two or more excellent athletes to best prepare them for the Sydney Games.

"The JOC is adamant to implement a long-term plan that would develop sports in the Kingdom. In the next Olympics we will hopefully be participating on a competitive level," said the JOC official.

"High-level competition requires talent, training and preparation. That's where the role of the respective sports federations comes in. They have to start working seriously too."

The official said that once the IOC looks into the needs of Jordanian sportsmen it will adopt a plan whereby some athletes will be given specialised training courses. "Such programmes have produced world class athletes in many cases," he added.

Ramtha beat Ahli to reach Jordan Cup final

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Ramtha Tuesday scored a 1-0 win over Al Ahli to advance to the final match of the Jordan Cup competition.

Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib scored his team winning goal in the first half ending Al Ahli's hopes of reaching the final after they had eliminated titleholders Al Faisali.

Al Ramtha will be facing Premier League titleholders Al Wihdat in the final match of the second most important of the Kingdom's soccer competitions. No date has yet been set by the Jordan Soccer Federation.

Al Wihdat reached the final after defeating Al Hussein 2-1 in Monday's semifinal. Two of the 1996 competitions — the Cup winners Cup and Federation Shield have already been won by Al Faisali and Al Ramtha. That leaves only the Premier League title up for grabs. Al Faisali topped the 10-team standings at the end of the first round of the competition which resumes Nov. 26.

Olajuwon, Barkley lead Rockets past Jazz

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — Hakeem Olajuwon scored 23 points, Charles Barkley grabbed 20 rebounds and the Houston Rockets held the Utah Jazz to a mere nine points in the fourth quarter for a 75-72 comeback win on Monday.

Olajuwon and rookie Emanuel Davis scored five points apiece in the final quarter, outscoring the entire Jazz squad over the last 12 minutes.

Mario Elie added 16 points and Clyde Drexler had 10 for Houston, which overcame a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit to remain unbeaten.

"Defense was the theme," Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich said. "I expected a game like this."

"At halftime, I was pretty happy, we played horrible and were only down by seven (37-30). It's amazing we could win a game like this on the road against a very good team."

Olajuwon added eight rebounds for Houston, which won despite shooting just 39 percent (24-of-62) from the field and committing 22 turnovers.

"I tell you it was fun out there," said newest Rocket Barkley, who has an astounding 53 rebounds in

his last two games. Karl Malone had 16 points and 14 rebounds and John Stockton added 14 points to pace Utah, which lost for the first time in three games.

In Portland, Tyrone Corbin scored 10 of his 14 points in the first quarter as the Atlanta Hawks raced to a 19-point lead and cruised to their first win of the season, a 94-76 victory over the Trail Blazers.

Mookie Blaylock scored

22 points, Steve Smith added 19 for the Hawks, who outscored Portland 32-13 in the first quarter and then played just about even with the Blazers the rest of the way.

Kenny Anderson scored 14 points and Isaiah Rider added 12 for Portland (2-1), which dropped its home opener for the second straight season.

The Hawks used an

early 15-0 run to score 20 of the game's first 26 points in putting the game away early.

Corbin ignited the burst with consecutive three-pointers and Blaylock followed with back-to-back layups to help the Hawks gain a 14-point cushion with 4:07 left in the first quarter.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TANMAY HIRSH

THE CASE OF THE VANISHING LOSER

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 9 7 4 3 2
♥ A 10 9 7
♦ Void
♣ K Q J 4

WEST
♠ 5
♥ J 8 8 5 3
♦ 10 6 5 4 3 2
♣ A 7

EAST
♠ K Q J 10
♥ K Q 4
♦ Q J 8 7
♣ 6 3

SOUTH
♠ A 8 8
♥ 7 2
♦ A K 9
♣ A 10 8 5 2

THE bidding: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♣ Pass 1♣ 1♣ Pass
2♣ Pass 2♣ Pass
3♣ Pass 3♣ Pass

Opening lead: Five of ♠.
Has bridge improved dramatically over the years? Yes, if you consider the great strides made in bidding. But when it comes to the play of the hand, the legends of yesterday were every bit as good as those of today. For example, this hand was played more than 60 years ago, and it highlights both points.

No modern player would respond in a four-card major suit while suppressing a five-card minor simply because of the quality of the suit. It becomes impossible later to give

a true picture of the hand, because partner will always expect the first bid suit to be as long or longer than the one mentioned later. However, that probably made no difference to the end result, since it is not easy to stay out of six clubs.

West led a spade, and it required no great genius on the part of declarer, the late Waldemar von Zedlitz, to realize that it had to be a singleton. It seemed that declarer was destined to lose two spade tricks, but Waldy, as he was called by his peers, had other ideas.

Declarer won the ace of spades, crossed to the ace of hearts and ruffed a heart in hand. Each queen was a welcome sight. The ace and king of clubs were cashed to draw the opponents' fangs, followed by another heart ruff. When that fetched the king from East, the slam was halfway home.

Declarer cashed the ace and king of diamonds, discarding two spades from the board, and ruffed a diamond. Dummy's last heart was led and, when East showed out, all was well. Instead of ruffing, declarer pitched a spade. West had to win the trick and, with nothing left in hand but red cards, was forced to give declarer a ruff-alf. Declarer trumped in dummy while jettisoning the last spade from the closed hand, and South's only loser was a heart.

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TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan announces that it has released a Call for Tenders for a second national public paging licence. The new service operator will compete with the existing licensee, Jordan Radio Paging (JRP). Following consultation with the industry, the TRC issued the Call for Tenders dated November 4, 1996 (TRC Call 1225-1), which sets out the process that the TRC will follow in awarding the new licence. The process consists of two phases. During the first phase, a special tender evaluation committee will review the technical aspects of the submissions from all applicants. Those applicants who successfully pass this phase will participate in the second phase, in which their sealed financial proposals will be opened at a meeting of all qualifying applicants. The applicant offering the highest licence acquisition fee will be invited to sign a licence agreement to provide the paging service.

Parties interested in applying for the new paging licence may obtain a copy of the Call for Tenders from the TRC upon payment of JD 1500 before December 5, 1996. The deadline for the submission of applications is February 4, 1997.

For a copy of TRC Call 1996-1, or for further information, contact: The Office of the Director General Telecommunications Regulatory Commission P.O. Box 850967, Amman 11185, Jordan Telephone (962) 6-86231 • Fax (962) 6-8636-11

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Coiffeur Nabil Majdoub

returned to Amman after taking part, upon an invitation from Tony and Guy, Carita Vidal Sassoon, in the annual international festival for hairdressing whose activities were held in Paris and London during Oct. 20-30. The festival, which presented the newest hairdressing styles in Europe, included a group of top hairdressers for women in France, Britain and Italy.

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Solomon-like for Japan-South

By Japan Times — Japanese and South Korean soccer fans look to Zurich on Wednesday for Solomon-like judge on their co-hosting of the 2002 World Cup, a task likely to have defied the legendary king.

The soccer governing body FIFA, however, is governing the countries in Zurich to tackle issues like who should host the final, how many teams should be invited and a myriad of logistical and financial questions.

The thorniest problem looks sure to be which country will host the final. There have even been suggestions that the two countries could be forced to share the hosting duties.

South Korea and Japan to play each other in the winner getting the prize. But some soccer officials in both countries worry privately that there could be a clash between the two nations.

The only way for everyone to be happy would be to play it on an aircraft carrier midway between Japan and South Korea, one Western diplomat said.

But of course then there would be an argument over whose aircraft carrier and flag would be the midpoint.

In Zurich, delegates from Japan and South Korea will meet FIFA's 2002 bid committee member, Guillermo Canedo, and Japanese Ambassador Antonio Matarrese of Italy's FIFA General Secretary, Sepp Blatter.

On the eve of the meeting, South Korea's officials, at least publicly, seemed to be in the public relations battle of playing conciliatory.

While Japanese officials have already taken their positions on key points, South Koreans say they go to Zurich seeking "the principle of equal opportunity."

Basically, we will begin negotiations and on mutual understanding and cooperation, a South Korean world cup official said.

But the meeting is shaping up, before it is over, as the first of many show-downs over the next six years.

Japan wants answers. South Korea can't believe there is time in Zurich to agree a great deal.

The time, we have only two hours to say things with Japan. We do not

Schultz-McCarthy

seeded fellow Chandra Rubin (8-6).

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16-year-old was considered a future top-10 player. She looked set to win the third seeded in the tournament.

opening day Schultz-McCarthy lost the tables to a 1-6 6-4 6-4 second victory.

44th-ranked Serbian Kimberly Po sixth seed Sakuma Maleeva of Japan (4-2) in just minutes, and Linda Fournet seventh.

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Solomon-like wisdom needed for Japan-South Korea meeting

TOKYO (R) — Japanese and South Korean soccer fans look to Zurich on Wednesday for Solomon-like judgments on their co-hosting of the 2002 World Cup, a task likely to have defied even the legendary king.

World soccer's governing body FIFA, in a meeting with the countries in Zurich, starts to tackle issues like who should host the final, how many teams should take part and a myriad of logistical and financial questions.

The thorniest problem looks sure to be which country will host the final.

There have even been suggestions that a way out of the dilemma could be for South Korea and Japan to play each other with the winner getting the prize.

But some soccer officials in both countries worry privately that there could be a backlash against the whole tournament in the country which loses out.

"The only way for everyone to be happy would be to play it on an aircraft carrier mid-way between Japan and South Korea," one Western diplomat said.

"But of course then there would be an argument over whose aircraft carrier and where is the midpoint."

In Zurich, delegates from Japan and South Korea will meet FIFA's 2002 study group members Guillermo Canedo of Mexico, Antonio Matarrese of Italy and FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter.

On the eve of the meeting, South Korean officials, at least publicly, seemed ahead in the public relations battle of appearing conciliatory.

While Japanese officials have already staked out their positions on key points, the South Koreans say they go to Zurich respecting "the principle of equal opportunities."

"Basically, we will begin negotiations based on mutual understanding and co-operation," a South Korean world cup spokesman said.

But the meeting is shaping up, before it even starts, as the first of many show-downs over the next six years.

Japan wants answers South Korea doesn't believe there is time in Zurich to achieve a great deal.

"This time, we have only two hours to discuss things with Japan. We do not

expect much but we will do our best to narrow differences," the spokesman for South Korea's office of preparation for the 2002 FIFA World Cup told Reuters in Seoul.

Expectations from the Japanese side are far higher on what the Zurich meeting can — and must — do.

"It is imperative that FIFA come out with a course of action as soon as possible," Ken Naganuma, head of the Football Association of Japan (JFA) and Japan's 2002 World Cup committee, said last week.

Japan says swift decisions are needed on the number of teams and financial arrangements so it can advise by next month which of 15 Japanese cities have been selected as World Cup sites.

However, there is one ray of light.

The Zurich meeting was not expected to discuss the issue of allowing North Korea a role in the World Cup, the South Korean spokesman said.

"We will focus on the negotiation of how we can share the game with Japan. At the moment, we are not considering North Korea's role in the game," he added.

Japan, always lukewarm to the idea of co-hosting, already has forthrightly asked FIFA to give it the right to stage both the final and the opening match, informed sources said.

It also wants the number of teams raised from 32 to 40 and FIFA to bear some of the burden in lost revenue from splitting the tournament by contributing towards the extra costs out of the \$1.0 billion sale of television rights.

Japan-South Korean rivalry, as intense as an India-Pakistan or England-Germany sporting clash, is rooted in Tokyo's colonial occupation of Korea and World War II events.

"I don't think people in Europe realise just how different Japan and South Korea are," a Japan World Cup spokesman said recently.

"Overcoming the cultural, historical and administrative differences is going to be monumentally difficult but until the meeting on November 6, we can't even get started."

Saintly comfortably wins Melbourne Cup

MELBOURNE (R) — Australian stayer Saintly cruised to victory in the A\$2.2 million (\$1.74 million) Melbourne Cup Tuesday, securing Bart Cummings' reputation as the greatest trainer in the country's horse racing history.

The four-year-old Chestnut, an 8-1 chance, stayed close to the rail for most of the 3,200-metre (two-mile) race and sped from the field at the home turn to win by two-and-a-quarter lengths from 33-1 shot Count Chivas.

Skybeau, a 50-1 outsider, finished a neck further back in third place at Flemington.

Saintly clocked a time of three minutes 18.8 seconds, the sixth fastest in the race's 135-year history.

It was Cummings' 10th victory in Australia's most prestigious horse race, five more than his nearest rival in the training stakes.

But there was disappointment for giant Irish raider and 4-1 pre-race favourite Oscar Schindler, who failed to find any extra pace on the home straight and finished a disappointing 15th of 22 runners.

"He just didn't fire," said jockey Michael Kinane of the Irish stallion, who had struck fear into his rivals with a fast-finishing third in last month's Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. "No sooner had I asked him than I knew he wouldn't do it."

Cummings, who scored the first of his 10 Melbourne Cup wins in 1965 with Light Fingers and his last with Let's Elope five years ago, had faced questions before the race over Saintly's ability to stay the course.

Jockey Darren Beadman, who rode a textbook race



Jockey Darren Beadman raises his fingers in jubilation after winning the Melbourne Cup on Saintly in the 135th running of the Melbourne Cup at Flemington Race Track in Melbourne November 5 (Reuters photo)

on Saintly to win his second Melbourne Cup, praised Cummings in his post-race speech.

"Bart Cummings is an

absolute genius with a capital G," said Beadman, who won the race on Kingston Rule in 1990.

Not only did Cummings

breed and train Saintly, but he owned and trained its sire, Sky Chase, as well. "So this was a nice one to win," said the 68-year-old

trainer, who confessed to having a tear in his eye as his charge sped home.

"It's getting tougher each year. This is very special and I savour it very much," said Cummings, who is based at Randwick in Sydney but was a favourite with Tuesday's crowd of around 90,000 in Melbourne.

Saintly's Malaysian owner, Dato Tan Chin Nam, thanked Cummings for selling him a horse capable of winning the Melbourne Cup. Cummings had kept a share of the horse.

The two have collaborated before successfully, with Think Big, which won the cup in 1974 and 1975 and was the last horse to win back-to-back.

"What can you say about Saintly?" asked Dato Tan. "I can say in the Australian language — Saintly, you beaut."

"As for Darren Beadman, if there is such a thing as a copybook ride, this was it," he added.

Cummings said Saintly would now go for "a holiday in Japan", referring to the lucrative Japan Cup in Tokyo on November 24.

Kinane, who persuaded owner Oliver Lehan to bring Oscar Schindler to Melbourne instead of going for the more lucrative Breeders Cup turf in Toronto, said the horse had appeared perfectly well settled before the race.

"You have to take a stand and take a decision. We felt — not just me but the trainer too — that he was the right horse," said Kinane, who steered another Irish stayer, Vintage Crop, to victory three years ago.

"At his very best you would have expected him to beat them," he added.

Schultz-McCarthy holds off Venus Williams in Oakland; Rubin, Maleeva ousted

OAKLAND (R) — Fifth seed Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands used her booming serve and superior experience to rally past future star Venus Williams at the Bank of the West Classic Monday.

The 16-year-old Williams, considered a can't miss future top-10 player, looked set to claim the third seeded victim of the tournament's opening day when Schultz-McCarthy turned the tables to record a 1-6 6-4 6-4 first-round victory.

Earlier, 34th-ranked American Kimberly Po blitzed sixth seed Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria 6-0 6-2 in just 48 minutes and Linda Wild bounced seventh-

seeded fellow American Chanda Rubin 6-2, 7-6 (8-6).

Rubin was playing her first match after missing much of the year with a wrist injury.

Schultz-McCarthy turned her match around by changing the tempo of her shots and serving much better after being dominated in the first set by the talented teenager.

"The court was a little slower than the ones I have been playing on in the past couple months," said the big-serving Dutchwoman. "She was keeping the ball low and forcing me to play her game in the first set."

It was the fifth and last tournament of the year for Williams, whose father is making sure she

does not become a victim of early burnout.

Asked if her 12th-ranked opponent's experience was a factor in turning the match around, Williams said: "I suppose it would matter a lot, but since I don't have much (experience), I couldn't tell you right now."

Experience certainly did not help 18th-ranked Maleeva, who was never a factor in her match.

Rubin fell victim to an array of misplaced shots early and a lack of match play — the effects of nearly six months away from the Tour.

Rubin looked sharper in the second set, going up a break on Wild's first service game. But Wild returned the favour with

Rubin leading 5-3 and serving for the set.

Wild then held her serve for 5-5 before taking the tie-break 8-6.

"I felt fine hitting," said Rubin, who was injured in March and missed the French Open, Wimbledon, the Olympics and the U.S.

Open. "I've been hitting well and I was definitely ready to play. Linda played well and I didn't take advantage of all my opportunities."

Top seed Monica Seles, a two-time champion who is playing this event for the first time since 1992, received a

first-round bye and may not see action before Thursday.

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Taleban warn Iran against interfering in Afghan affairs

KABUL (AFP) — Kabul's Taleban rulers Tuesday warned of possible military action against neighbouring Iran if Tehran does not stop its alleged interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

But acting Information and Culture Minister Amir Khan Mutaqi stressed the Taleban would not cross into Iranian territory to launch any attack on Iran.

"If the unfair Iranian interference in Afghanistan continues, our people are very unlikely to tolerate it," Mr. Mutaqi told journalists.

"If they attack Afghanistan or continue their interference we will have to defend our territory, but we will not enter their territory," he added.

He said that Iran's alleged interference, including sheltering anti-Taleban alliance troops and supplying them with arms and ammunition, was "intensifying and becoming more flagrant" each day.

The warning came as the alliance, which includes northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum and the government ousted from Kabul by the Taleban five weeks ago, are battling the militia in northwestern Afghanistan, which borders on Iran.

Troops loyal to the ex-regime were reportedly flown into northwestern Afghanistan from Iran, apparently to prepare for an attack on the Taleban-held western province of Herat which shares a border with Iran.

The Taleban has repeatedly warned Tehran, which was allied with the ex-regime of President Burhuddin Rabbani, not to help the opposition forces.

But the minister said the Taleban would avoid military confrontation with their neighbour and wanted to solve the problem through talks. The possibility of a military confrontation is very unlikely, he said.

"We will try to solve our problems through negotiations and understanding and have repeatedly asked them to create conditions for good mutual relations," he added.

In addition, Mr. Mutaqi — the Kabul government's spokesman — said the Taleban had captured a strategic hill near Kabul's main military airbase at Bagram, 50 kilometres north of here, killing 20 opposition fighters and capturing significant ammunition stocks.

The base was seized by ex-government and Dostum forces on Oct. 18 after the pair launched a counter-attack on the until-then victorious Taleban north of Kabul. The claim could not be independently confirmed.

Mr. Mutaqi also announced that the Taleban's mysterious supreme leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, had appointed nine new acting cabinet ministers to junior posts in the recently formed Kabul government.



Taleban fighters fire a Soviet-made cannon against former government forces on the front line, 30 kilometres north of the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Israel: Iran, Syria say they will try to prevent militant attacks

TEL AVIV (AP) — Responding to requests by Israel to rein in militants, Syria and Iran said they were not involved in terrorism, a spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday.

Nevertheless, Israel expects the governments of Syria and Iran will use their influence to curb the activities of militants, said the spokesman, David Bar-Ilan.

Israeli newspapers reported Tuesday that Syria and Iran had assured Israel they will try to prevent attacks by militants in the Jewish state. The messages were delivered to Mr. Netanyahu by American and German officials, the reports said.

Israeli security forces have been on high alert since last month after receiving specific warnings that the militant group Islamic Jihad planned to carry out an attack in Israel.

In recent days, police have closed some roads in downtown Tel Aviv, set up checkpoints on major highways and increased patrols in shopping malls. The unprecedented security measures have caused miles-long traffic jams during morning rush hour.

Mr. Netanyahu defended the security measures, saying the danger had not passed. "There are continuous warnings," Mr. Netanyahu said in remarks

broadcast Tuesday on Israel Radio. "We are not hesitating, as you have seen, to activate all means."

Over the weekend, Mr. Netanyahu asked the United States and Germany to use their influence in Syria and Iran, respectively, to help rein in the militants.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher asked Syrian President Hafez Al Assad to prevent a possible attack by Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian group based in Damascus, the Israeli Haaretz reported Tuesday.

Mr. Assad responded that he opposes attacks against Israel, the newspaper said. Mr. Christopher relayed details to Mr. Netanyahu on how Syria is trying to prevent attacks in Israel, Haaretz said.

In response, Mr. Netanyahu decided to ease some of the security measures in Israel, the report said.

Another Israeli daily, Yediot Achronot, said Germany also received assurances that Iran and the heads of groups backed by Tehran would refrain from carrying out attacks against Israelis in the near future.

Mr. Bar-Ilan, the Netanyahu spokesman, said German and U.S. officials gave Israel messages from Iran and Syria stating that "they were not involved in terrorism."

"We nevertheless assume they (Syria and Iran) will exert some influence on these terror groups," Mr. Bar-Ilan said.

A Syrian government newspaper warned Tuesday that Israel might "explode the situation" through military action on the Golan Heights or in southern Lebanon.

Mr. Netanyahu "has pushed the situation in the region to the worst level of tension," the Al Thawra daily said in an editorial.

The commentary in the closely controlled newspaper coincides with tension between the two countries on the Israeli-held Golan Heights due to the continuing freeze of their peace talks.

Military manoeuvres by the two also have contributed to the tension. Mr. Assad on Monday rejected suggestions that recent Syrian military exercises were a threat to Israel and said that he could not rule out an Israeli attack.

The Israelis also have been worried about the deployment in September of elite Syrian units near Israeli-controlled Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights.

They responded last week by staging manoeuvres on the Golan, describing them as preparation for possible Syrian military action to pressure Israel to withdraw from the Heights.

Pentagon 'investigating' dual F-16 missile launches in Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon is investigating the launching of two U.S. anti-radar missiles by F-16 fighter jets over southern Iraq, Defence Secretary William Perry says.

Mr. Perry told reporters at the Pentagon Monday that the pilots were justified in their actions because their cockpit warning systems indicated they were being targeted by Iraqi missiles.

But, the defence secretary added, "because the collateral information we have has not provided full support as to exactly what happened, we have begun an intensive investigation."

Iraq denied any missile firings occurred, characterising the reports as a campaign ploy by the Clinton administration.

"Fabricating this false report is part of American-style electioneering," an Iraqi Foreign Ministry official was quoted Monday by the official Iraqi News Agency. "It seems that, for the second time, fabricators of this report have the urge to divert the attention of American voters from their domestic scandals by creating false problems abroad."

In separate incidents, the pilots of U.S. Air Force F-16s fired missiles when they had been "locked on" by Iraqi surface-to-air missile sites, Pentagon officials said. The first such firing occurred early Saturday and the second on Monday.

Mr. Perry said it was not immediately clear what exactly caused the aircraft to pick up such signals. It also was not clear whether faulty warning equipment might be involved or whether the jets were playing cat-and-mouse games with their radar systems, he said.

In the meantime, allied flights over Iraq's southern no-fly zone will continue, even though Saddam Hussein's forces have been "quite quiet" in the past week, the defence secretary said.

Mr. Perry said he had no reports on possible damage caused by the missiles.

Even though it now appears that no Iraqi missiles were launched, both pilots acted appropriately, he said, explaining that their rules of engagement allow quick responses to potentially hostile acts.

Asked whether Iraq's move to rebuild its air defences caused him any worry, Mr. Perry responded, "no." He said allied aircraft would continue to monitor the zone carefully.

The second firing occurred at 0900 GMT Monday about 40 kilometres from where the earlier firing took place. Both occurred just south of the 32nd Parallel, Mr. Perry said.

EU troika to skip Arab Jerusalem in Orient House row

TEL AVIV (AFP) — European Union foreign ministers will skip Jerusalem during a Middle East tour next week because Israel will not allow them to visit Orient House, the unofficial Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) office in Arab East Jerusalem, European officials said Tuesday.

A spokesman at the Tel Aviv embassy of Ireland, which currently holds the rotating EU presidency, said the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had refused to schedule meetings with the EU envoys because of their intention to visit the Orient House.

Israel rejects any independent Palestinian political presence in Jerusalem and views diplomatic activity at the Orient House as a challenge to Israel's claim of sovereignty over the city, including the Arab East which was seized in the 1967 war and later "annexed".

The European Union decided last month that it would not accept the Israeli ban and that its troika of foreign ministers representing the union's present, past and future presidents would include the Orient House on any Jerusalem visit.

After Mr. Netanyahu informed the Europeans that neither he nor Foreign Minister David Levy would meet with them during this month's tour, the EU troika decided to only visit

Palestinian self-rule headquarters in Gaza City and to skip Jerusalem.

For logistical reasons the delegation, led by Ireland's Dick Spring and including his counterparts from Italy and the Netherlands, will fly into Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport on Sunday and then head directly to Gaza City for meetings with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The delegation will overnight in Gaza and then depart through Ben Gurion without stopping in Jerusalem, although the embassy spokesman said that "at Israel's demand we have agreed to meet Levy in Cairo" during the Mideast economic conference next Tuesday to Thursday.

The Israeli government had been hoping that the troika would follow the example of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and Britain's Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind who both visited Jerusalem in the past week without stopping off at the Orient House.

When French President Jacques Chirac visited Israel in October, a dispute over Orient House visits led him to leave his foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, out of the Jerusalem leg of his Middle East tour.

The European Union and most of the rest of the international community have never recognised Israel's 'annexation' of East Jerusalem.

Algerian rebels kill 10 women, children

PARIS (R) — Rebels have killed 10 women and three children, cutting their throats one by one, in a village near Algiers, an Algerian newspaper said on Tuesday.

Liberte, usually well informed on security matters, said more than 20 rebels invaded Dououda, at the weekend and surrounded a house.

The women and children tried to flee but were dragged into one room and killed. "The 13 persons were gathered in a bedroom where they had their throats cut one after another," said Liberte.

Dououda is a cluster of coastal villages, 50 kilometres west of the capital, Algiers.

The mass killing took place less than a month after guerrillas killed more than 30 bus and car passengers, shooting them or cutting their throats, at a fake roadblock they erected in the southern province of Laghouat.

There have been several similar attacks on villages, some of which have formed their own militia to guard the communities. Others have joined the government-organised force of local volunteer guards.

In last weekend's attack, Algeria is gearing up to hold a referendum to amend the constitution on Nov. 28. The draft constitution bans Islamist parties in President Liamine Zeroual's bid to pull the country out of civil strife and establish a multi-party democracy.

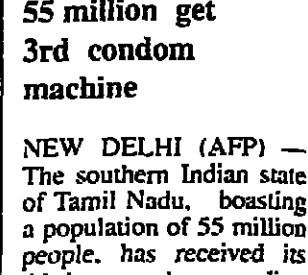
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55 million get 3rd condom machine

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, boasting a population of 55 million people, has received its third condom vending machine, the Press Trust of India said Tuesday. S.R. Balasubramaniam, the local minister for public grievances, unveiled the machine and promised two more would be installed soon.

"Such (contraception) awareness is necessary in view of the dangers being caused due to a population explosion," he said. The vending machine, installed by the Red Cross Society in the central bus station in the town of Coimbatore, contains about 110 packets of condoms. Tamil Nadu has one of the highest numbers of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) cases in India. Official estimates say the country will have five million AIDS sufferers by the turn of the century.

'Dr. Zhivago' love letters on sale

LONDON (AFP) — Love letters from Russian author Boris Pasternak to the woman who was the inspiration for Lara, the heroine of his Nobel prize-winning novel "Dr. Zhivago," are to be auctioned here later this month. The tragic love affair between Pasternak and Olga Ivinskaya inspired the novelist to write his epic novel set during the Russian revolution and its violent aftermath. The poems and letters were taken from Ivinskaya in 1960 by the KGB, the former Soviet Union's intelligence service, and she herself was sent to the Gulag twice for her association with Pasternak. Only a few of the documents were ever returned by the KGB and the most precious papers are now to be sold by her heirs at the auction on Nov. 27. The manuscripts are expected to fetch 500,000 pounds (\$750,000) at the sale at Christie's auction house.

Brundtland working on memoirs

OSLO (AFP) — Just eleven days after resigning as Norwegian prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland is well advanced in writing her memoirs, the Norwegian news agency NTB said on Tuesday. The 57-year-old, who is back in parliament as a member, has already written 100 pages by hand on foolscap paper. "Yes, this will probably be a book. I have just let it flow, that which came naturally out of my pen," she told NTB, adding: "It is an unusual feeling of freedom that I haven't had in many years." Gro, as she is affectionately called in Norway, would not say when her writings might be ready for the literary market. "Right now I want to write spontaneously. The next process is to write a book," she said, admitting that she is computer illiterate and a PC course is planned. Ms. Brundtland, who served as prime minister for 10 years between 1981 and 1996, officially resigned on Oct. 25 at her own request, handing over the reins of power to Labour Party Chairman Thorbjørn Jagland. Her name has circulated as one of the possible candidates to take over the post of U.N. secretary general when Boutros Ghali's mandate expires at the end of the year.

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and call 'astonishes' A... The Arab League... 'astonishment' over a... grouping in the Middle East... Arab League Secretary... Arab League summoned the British... Blatherwick to criticise... to him my astonishment... an OSCE-type organisation... we must first resolve the... region and establish peace... cooperation in the regi... We cannot imagine regi... Middle East at a time whe... Arab territory and Iran... belonging to the United Arab... included

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